Book reviews


This book is based on 12 years' experience of the management of haemophilia at the Haemophilia Rehabilitation Center, Orthopaedic Hospital, Los Angeles. The book is concerned with the comprehensive management of haemophiliacs, and one can see the scope of the treatment from the qualifications of the contributors. These include a haematologist, a nurse, a physiotherapist, a psychiatric social worker, orthopaedic surgeons, an oral surgeon, a radiologist, an expert in rehabilitation medicine, a financial co-ordinator, and a medical photographer.

The book opens with a chapter on the haematological care of haemophiliacs. This section is simply and clearly written and provides useful guidelines for replacement therapy for haemophiliacs. There then follow sections on medical care, nursing care, radiological evaluation, and the management of musculoskeletal problems and of dental problems. All these chapters, particularly that dealing with musculoskeletal problems, are of a high standard and are obviously written by workers who have considerable first-hand experience of the care of haemophiliacs. The last four chapters of the book deal with the psychological, social, and financial problems which beset the haemophiliacs.

I think this book provides a very valuable introduction to the management of haemophilia and I strongly recommend it to everyone who is involved in the day-to-day care of haemophiliacs.

C. R. C. RIZZA


This book is not likely to have any great appeal to clinical pathologists. One suspects that there has been a delay in production somewhere in that there are only a few references more recent than 1973. The pathophysiology of liver failure is fully and adequately reviewed in the first chapter, and there follows a rather sketchy account of diagnosis and medical management of hepatic encephalopathy. The subsequent chapters deal with the various support measures which have been tried—exchange transfusion, plasmapheresis, extracorporeal perfusion, cross circulation, auxiliary transplants, haemodialysis, and total body washout—but these are rather personalised accounts, which often fail to put their individual value into perspective. The more recent sophisticated approaches with new membranes, exchange columns and so on are, of course, not even touched upon. The book, therefore, is of very limited appeal and can scarcely be regarded as current.

R. N. M. MACSWEEEN


Given an imponderable disease on which so many hypotheses have already been wrecked, it is valuable to see the directions in which scientific activity still continues. Multiple sclerosis may well be the testing ground in which many present concepts of the mechanisms of chronic infection and host response are proved, or, on past experience, their failure will at least show the way for further work. The first of these books is an excellent account of a conference held in late 1974, and the second is a more up-to-date and equally critical review of selected aspects of multiple sclerosis. To a large extent they complement each other, but there are sufficient differences between the authors and their interests to make it worth reading both works. The coverage is broad and ranges over the basic physiology of nerve conduction in demyelinated fibres, the many hints of virological and immunological mechanisms in the disease, the less definite involvement of fatty acids, and, at a more practical level, improvements in laboratory diagnosis, and the always hopeful attempts at specific treatment. At a time when the specialisation of neurological sciences seems to be taking them away from the rest of medicine, these two books will serve as useful and readable reminders that we can all learn from the brain.

A. D. DAYAN


Professor Naib has again produced a textbook full of concise basic cytopathological detail, often with precise proportions and percentages of cell changes that may at times offend the erudite but serve a great purpose for the neophyte or laboratory worker. Biology is never so simple as to be presented as straight fractions, especially when no reference is given to the quantitative data presented, though this would probably be found in the ample supplementary reading list given at the end of each chapter.

Nevertheless the work is compendious in such a small volume and presents a very practical aid to the cytopathologist. Dr Naib has always made the artist-drawings a great feature of his publications and this is no exception, though it is a pity that some of the cell and tissue photographs are not so clear and helpful.

There are new chapters on the breast, the eyes, the skin, and the central nervous system, though the latter deals mainly with cells of the cerebrospinal fluid and not the diagnostic smear technique for neurosurgery.

Fine needle aspiration biopsy and the use of fibrescopes in the gastrointestinal tract are commented upon only briefly, and certain features such as the Nile blue sulphate test for fetal maturity or sexing of the fetus by cytoplasmic and nuclear changes are not mentioned. On the other hand, he has produced a fairly full study of bacterial and parasitical disease, including his favourite subject—viruses.

In spite of the above deficiencies, Zuher M. Naib has improved on his first edition, and many cytologists will find it a valuable addition to their libraries.

O. A. N. HUSAIN


Curricular changes in the teaching of medicine to students in recent years have centred on 'topic-teaching' under the organisation of a multidisciplinary team. The latter in many medical schools have prepared 'core-documents' which put
Hepatic Support in Acute Liver Failure

R. N. M. Macsween

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http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/
used by' excepted. For all the other groups cited, this book is totally inadequate, and it cannot begin to compete with fuller texts of clinical immunology. In one respect only would research workers draw comfort from its perusal—the authors are honest men, and summarising statements such as 'it is extremely probable that lymphocytes have an effector role in the rheumatoid joint' and 'genetic viral and environmental factors might be operating together to produce the disease syndrome' will at least encourage them to believe that there is room for progress in this field.

A. M. DENMAN


The current Pathology Annual contains 16 articles which are aimed largely at the diagnostic pathologist. As a whole, it is disappointing and it contains little to excite the imagination. It is hard to justify the inclusion of a review of malignant struma ovarii based on a single case report, or an article concerning necropsy studies of liver cell carcinoma in Barcelona in a volume of this type. Some of the other articles are not up to the standard set in previous years, and the saga of Dr Job Plodd has surely outrun its initial humour. Nevertheless, there are good things in this annual. The review by Whitehead of intestinal ischaemia pulls together much material published in diverse journals and is a valuable summary of present views. Wheeler and Enterline write lucidly on lobular carcinoma of the breast, and Ober provides a good though rather discursive view of the effects of stilboestrol as seen by a histopathologist.

I will be happy to see this annual in the hospital library but it is of low priority among books to be purchased from my own pocket.

G. SLAVIN

Correction

On page 591 of the June issue, in a review of Multiple Sclerosis: British Medical Bulletin, vol. 33, no. 1, the year of publication should have been 1977.