Letters to the Editor

ACP Broadsheet 80

This Broadsheet, sent to members of the Association with the October 1973 issue of the Journal, is a useful review of techniques for estimating bacteria and white cells in urine. It is also a remarkable piece of chauvinism. Twenty-one of the 23 references are to British papers, the two exceptions being papers about estimating urinary glucose. Fundamental American contributions to our understanding of urinary tract infection, notably those of E. H. Kass and his colleagues, are extensively used in the Broadsheet but their origins are not acknowledged. The eye-catching and all-important fig 1 is clearly based on Kass's work—indeed, I saw him draw a closely similar graph on a blackboard as far back as 1959. The first paragraph on page 10 clearly implies that 'significant bacteriuria . . . without increased pus cell excretion' was first described in 1963 and 1964 by British writers, including two of the authors of the Broadsheet; yet Kass had written on this subject well before that time. Admittedly such a Broadsheet cannot be expected to give a comprehensive reference list for the subject, but even so I think that our Association now owes Dr Kass and his compatriots an apology.

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References

- Kass, E. H. (1955). Chemotherapeutic and antibiotic drugs in the management of infections of the urinary tract. *Amer. J. Med.*, **18**, 764-781.
Kass, E. H. (1956). Asymptomatic infections of the urinary tract. *Trans. Ass. Amer. Phycns*, **69**, 56-64.
Kass, E. H. (1957). Bacteriuria and the diagnosis of infections of the urinary tract. *Arch. intern. Med.*, **100**, 709-714.

ACP Broadsheet 80: The Reply

Thank you for sending us a copy of Dr Turk's letter about ACP Broadsheet 80, which we wrote.

The letter partly answers its own objections. As we understand it, a Broadsheet is not intended to include a comprehensive review of the under-

standing of the subject. Indeed, when the authors have published reviews on urinary tract infection elsewhere, full acknowledgement of the important studies of Kass and other Americans has, of course, been made^{1,2}. For example, the 'all important' figure 1 of the Broadsheet was previously published by us when referring to Kass's work and as a diagrammatic representation of his findings, although, unlike Dr Turk, we had not had the pleasure of seeing Dr Kass draw it on a blackboard.

A Broadsheet does, however, review technical methods and we tried to ensure that proper acknowledgement was made for these. The technical developments mentioned were not, in fact, first described by Americans. Therefore, although this was not our purpose, perhaps a touch of jingoism might even be justified in this context. We suggest that for anyone more familiar with the literature since 1957 or who had taken the trouble to check at least some of the references in the Broadsheet, these comments would be unnecessary. Also, we wonder whether the New Zealand and Australian authors in our reference list will take kindly to being regarded as British or will the Association be asked to apologise yet again?

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References

- Brumfitt, W., and Percival, A. (1964). Pathogenesis and laboratory diagnosis of non-tuberculous urinary tract infection. *J. clin. Path.*, **17**, 482-489 (see p 486).
Brumfitt, W. (1972). In *Renal Disease*, 3rd ed., edited by D. A. K. Black, pp. 367-397. Blackwell, Oxford.

Incidence and Isolation of Bacteroides Species from Clinical Material and their Sensitivity to Antibiotics

Under 'material and methods' I referred to the use of Robertson's cooked meat broth. This should have been cooked meat medium (Oxoid) which is a modification of Robertson medium. It has been the custom in this laboratory for many years to add one tablet (Oxoid CM82) to 10 ml distilled water in a Universal container, sealed by a metal screw

Book reviews

International Histological Classification of Tumours No. 8 Cytology of the Female Genital Tract By G. Riotton and W. M. Christopherson in collaboration with R. Lunt. (Pp. 41; 191 colour plates. Book only: £6.50; Book + 152 colour transparencies: £19.00.) Geneva: World Health Organization. 1973. Available through HMSO, London.

This book is number 8 in the series on International Classification of Tumours published by the World Health Organization. It was compiled by Riotton and Christopherson and 12 eminent cytologists of 10 different countries, with a view to standardizing cytological nomenclature for international use. Not surprisingly agreement between the participants appeared difficult to achieve, and the book is finally published as a preliminary classification and contains an invitation for criticisms and helpful suggestions.

Although the series is mainly concerned with the classification of tumours, the present volume also includes commonly used terms in non-malignant clinical cytology of the female genital tract, as well as recommended techniques for cell collection and fixation. Tumour classification (written in four languages) comprises cervical and endometrial malignancies, Mullerian mixed tumours and trophoblastic and extrauterine malignant neoplasms. Explanatory notes (in English only) describing the cells derived from these lesions are concise and dogmatic and in certain instances controversial. The same applies to the descriptions given to the normal and inflammatory aspects of gynaecological cytology.

However much one may disagree with the text, nobody could possibly find fault

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cap with a rubber liner, or with a polypropylene cap (Sterilin). After normal sterilization the bottles are stored at room temperature and inoculated without any further treatment. I note that this method differs from the directions given in the Oxoid manual (third edition, 1971). It is possible that the use of screw caps maintains anaerobic conditions more efficiently than do conventionally plugged tubes.

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