

showed growth, like urines with no inhibitors. This was also true when one considered strong inhibitions only. Presumably the inhibitors were diluted to insignificance through diffusion in the culture plate. The possibility that they could reduce the viable count of stored specimens has not been excluded.

Eight urines inhibited *E. coli* only, nine staphylococcus only, and 11 both. Thus about half the inhibitors, including five strong ones, were selective in action. Some were equally active after storage for two months at about 6°C. The chemical nature of the inhibitors has not been identified but it may be speculated that they are mainly from diet. The people at Manipal are almost exclusively strict vegetarians, which might have ensured a large supply of the vegetable

antibacterials like paciferrins. Leaves and tubers of *Arum* spp, one of the most popular dishes, contain enough oxalate crystals to cause itching of the mouth. Moreover, the people of Manipal take excessive amounts of spice, even by Indian standards, and turmeric is about as effective as acriflavine for some bacteria.

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The September 1970 Issue

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A screening technique for the detection of nasal carriers of antibiotic-resistant *staphylococcus aureus* E. R. STOKES, H. R. INGHAM AND J. B. SELKON

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Letters to the Editor

Notices

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I am grateful to all those who kindly provided serum specimens from patients suspected of fascioliasis, and to Dr G. Grant for his advice and encouragement.

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pathology as a 'stepping stone' to understanding disease in terms of biochemistry. This plea could be extended to other 'disciplines' in pathology. There are so many arguments even in this one book which demonstrate that the divisions within pathology are too rigid, and interplay between the branches needs to be even more encouraged as the boundaries become blurred.

A. G. SIGNY

The Human Placenta By R. Torpin. (Pp. xxiv + 190; 55 figures. \$11.75). Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1969.

Professor Torpin has been associated with 1,000 deliveries per year for nearly a quarter of a century, and has, naturally examined many thousand placentae. His special interest has been the formation of placenta circumvallata and marginata, and he has postulated the mechanism of the development of these types of placentation. In this present volume, he sets out concisely his theory of the origin of these placentae, and reviews other anomalies of the human placenta.

In his introduction Professor Torpin states that obstetrics, as a science, aside from the embryological portion, 'is still in the stages of advancement of astronomy of the middle ages. It may be one of the last branches of science so afflicted; it still has no firm scientific basis. There is a tremendous hiatus between human embryology, which now has been developed, and clinical obstetrics'. This is, of course, a rather extravagant statement; advances in obstetrics are being made daily in many parts of the world.

Professor Torpin considers his most significant statement that concerning growth of the placenta. He asserts that at any stage of pregnancy the placenta occupies one quarter of the area of the chorionic sac, and enlarges *pari passu* with the expansion of the uterus. He rightly emphasizes the fact that once the placenta has been attached to the uterine mucosa there is no detachment of the villi from the uterine wall as the uterus expands. In this he concurs with most modern embryologists and is at variance with some investigators, for example Grosser, who believe that during pregnancy there is a changing relationship between the attachment of the placental villi to the decidua basalis as the uterus enlarges. The author, however, maintains that there are only two major sources of placental variation: intrauterine site of blastocyst implantation and the degree of attachment of the conceptus to the decidua. All possible modifications, he adds, of these two origins are filled by varieties already known.

In discussing placenta duplex, he refers to this condition found in many other primates. He believes that the site of implantation may determine whether or not a bilobed placenta arises. In order to differentiate placenta duplex from a placenta with a succenturiate lobe, Professor Torpin suggests that the secondary placenta must have a diameter of at least half that of the main placenta. He deals in some detail with placenta circumvallata, a term which has superseded placenta marginata usually ascribed to Kolliker (1870), but, as he rightly points out, was first described by William Hunter. The clinical aspects of the condition are discussed, and some theories as to its aetiology are analysed.

The author deserves much credit for his excellent review of the whole literature, both in English and in other languages, of many aspects of placentation. While some may not agree with all of his conclusions, the book has added to our knowledge of the development both of the normal placenta and of some of the rarer conditions of placentation. The book is well illustrated and produced, and should be read by every obstetrician.

W. J. HAMILTON

Recent Advances in Blood Coagulation Edited by L. Poller. (Pp. ix + 362; illustrated. £5.) London J and A. Churchill. 1969.

This is the first time that haemostasis has been selected as a subject for the 'Recent Advances' series. It is essentially a technical book and to those versed in the subject most of its reading matter is necessarily reiterative and the overall title is not entirely appropriate. Nonetheless the time is certainly ripe for a review of this subject for there have been a number of significant shifts in opinion during the past few years; and the catholic selection of the topics covered allows the reader to revise his knowledge in a pleasant and readable fashion.

There are 16 chapters contributed by a cosmopolitan group of twenty authors selected to provide a wide coverage of all aspects of coagulation and fibrinolysis. In the order in which they appear the authors are: Armand Quick (Milwaukee) who appropriately gives a brief historical review; Davie, Hougie, and Lundblad (North Carolina) discuss coagulation mechanisms; Archer (a Suffolk veterinarian) describes blood clotting in vertebrates other than man; Nossel (New York) covers the early stages of clotting and reviews current thoughts on contact activation; and Hellem and Stormorken (Oslo) discuss platelet adhesion and aggregation.

These early chapters provide a sound

introduction so that this book can be read by non-specialists as well as those concerned in research. The next five contributions have a more clinical flavour: Douglas (Glasgow) and the editor, Poller (Manchester), describe anticoagulant therapy and its laboratory control; Blackburn (Sheffield) and Rizza and Biggs (Oxford) outline the clinical management of haemophilia; Hougie comments on circulating anticoagulants; and Ulutin (Istanbul) discusses the effect of sex hormones on coagulation with a brief note on oral contraceptives.

The next four chapters are devoted to fibrinolysis: a review by Fearnley (Gloucester); the defibrination syndrome (Ingram, London); snake venoms (de Vries and Cohen, Israel); and thrombolytic therapy (Schmutzler and Koller from Giessen and Basle). The final chapter by Ingram is concerned with the laboratory identification of clotting defects.

All in all this is a timely volume, of particular value to clinical haematologists who do not know all the answers to the awkward questions their colleagues devise. It is well worthwhile buying for the clinical laboratory reference shelves. The editor is to be congratulated on his selection of material so that the 16 different chapters blend together.

J. L. STAFFORD

Notice

EVENING LECTURES IN PATHOLOGY

A second series of evening lectures in pathology, organized under the auspices of the British Postgraduate Medical Federation, will be held from November 1970 to July 1971 on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6.0 to 7.30 pm. at the Institute of Neurology, Queen Square, London, WC1. Although the lecture will be suitable for candidates for the final MRC Path examinations, consultants and senior pathologists will be welcome. Enquiries for details of syllabus and fees to:

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