Book reviews

Pathology of Tumours of the Oral Tissues
2nd ed. By R. B. Lucas. (Pp. x + 386; 123 figures. £7.00.) London: Churchill Livingstone. 1972.

I must start this review by 'declaring an interest' as I had the pleasure of reading both editions in manuscript; however, as the author says in the preface, the views expressed are not necessarily mine, so it may be counted fair for me to review this book.

When the first edition appeared seven years ago it was widely welcomed as an authoritative account of the subject. This second edition is by no means a reprinting, for there is evidence throughout of thorough revision and updating in the light of advances in the intervening years.

The content is wider than the title implies, because in addition to discussions on tumours, there are chapters on leukoplakia and white lesions of the oral mucosa, cysts of the oral tissues, fibrous dysplasia of bone and ossifying fibroma, cherubism, and Paget's disease of bone. Also, there is an introductory chapter on the embryology and histology of the oral tissues. These chapters add greatly to the usefulness of the book. Most tumours and tumour-like conditions likely to be encountered in the mouth and jaws are mentioned here, the longer discussions being devoted to those lesions that are peculiar to the region, and those that are relatively common in the mouth even if they occur in other regions as well. Reference is made to the principal clinical and radiographic features and the illustrations include many clinical radiographs and photographs of operation specimens. The photomicrographs are excellent; they provide a most helpful mixture of low-power views to give the general distribution of the tissue components, and high-power views in which one really can see the important cellular detail.

In the chapter on nomenclature and classification of oral tumours, the author states, 'It is clear that much work remains to be done on the classification of odontogenic tumours, and that new schemes will appear, for some of the lesions concerned are of infrequent occurrence and their life history is not fully known at present.'

This is indeed one of the major problems, and coupled with this is the problem of variations in terminology. For example, the author uses the term 'odonto-ameloblastoma' but the description and illustrations of the lesion appear significantly different from those given in the recent WHO publication on the histological classification of odontogenic tumours.

Any discussion of odontogenic tumours is likely to run into difficulties when the 'cementoma' group is reached, because there is such a variety of these lesions and they are so little understood. However, one member of the group (the 'true cementoma' or 'benign cementoblastoma') is an easily recognizable and very distinctive entity. It is a pity that the author refers to this in the text, but describes the lesion simply as a 'cementoma' in the captions to the illustrations: Fig. 40 doubtfully shows a typical benign cementoblastoma. Also, I suggest that the 'ossifying fibromas' illustrated in Figs. 118-120 belong to the cementoma group, and are not true examples of ossifying fibroma.

However, these are differences of opinion in an area that is admittedly controversial. Professor Lucas has produced a second edition that is even better than the first. Anyone who has to deal with the histopathology of tumours and tumour-like conditions of the oral tissues will find this book invaluable, for it contains a balanced account based on long experience, excellent pictures, and lists of references that include many papers published as recently as 1970 (and even a few published in 1971).

IVOR R. H. KRAMER

Color Atlas of Oral Pathology. 3rd edn. By R. A. Colby, D. A. Kerr, and H. B. G. Robinson. (Pp. xiv + 207; 485 illustrations. £9.50.) Philadelphia and Toronto: J. B. Lippincott Co., Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1971.

This attractive atlas, now in its third edition, is made up of double-column pages: one column is occupied by three illustrations, and the other column contains a brief text. The illustrations include clinical photographs, photomicrographs, and radiographs: there are about 500, and all except the radiographs are in colour. There is also an introductory section on the histology and embryology of the oral region, and the book ends with an extensive bibliography (31 well filled pages) and an adequate index.

In comparison with the previous edition the text has now been set in a much more attractive typeface. About a dozen of the illustrations have been changed, either to give a better picture, or to make way for a limited amount of new material.

Almost all of the clinical photographs are very good. There is some variation in technical quality, but the cases shown are typical. The photomicrographs are not all as sharp as they should be, and some of the sections look very thick, but the magnifications are particularly well chosen to display the essential features of the lesions.

It is possible to criticize some of the illustrations, and parts of the text. For example, the 'odontogenic fibroma' looks more like a normal dental papilla, the section of a 'dentigerous cyst' clearly shows a keratocyst, and the note on the treatment of Vincent's infection makes no mention of metronidazole. However, within the limits imposed by the brevity of the text and the small number of illustrations relating to each condition, the authors have made a good summary. The book is stated to be intended mainly for general practitioners, but it will also be useful to students for revision purposes.

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Atlas of the Ultrastructure of Diseased Human Muscle. By W. G. P. Mair and F. M. S. Tomé. (Pp. vii + 249; illustrated. £4.50.) Edinburgh and London: Longman Group Ltd. 1972.

This collection of electron microscopic photographs illustrates the great variety of morphological changes which can be found in diseased human muscle. It seems that few, if any, of the abnormalities of the structure of muscle cells which can be seen with the electron microscope are specific for one or another disease entity and all the diagnoses accompanying the pictures are clinical ones. Electron microscopy has certainly not ousted the light microscopy of paraffin sections of a muscle biopsy for diagnostic purposes. This book does not seem to have been designed as a useful aid to diagnosis. There is no discussion of biopsy methods or of techniques of fixation and preparation, so important for the avoidance of artefact. The photographs are, on the whole, of good quality in spite of the loss of detail which is inevitable with reproduction. One could quarrel with some minor points such as swollen mitochondria and increased spaces between myofibrils (plate 70) being described as