ature for 30 minutes. To the tubes are now added 2 drops of 0.5% neutral red in 1% acetic acid. After gentle mixing and five minutes at room temperature a coverslipped wet preparation is scored for the percentage of neutrophils containing blocks of formazan.

We have found that the use of EDTA as an anticoagulant does not alter the correlation with proven bacterial infection provided the sample is tested the same day as collection, but we agree with the normal range (1-15%) given by Freeman and King.

We also agree that 'it cannot be sufficiently emphasized that this test depends on many factors' and would go further to state that its interpretation in a general hospital situation is fraught with difficulty. We have evidence that myeloproliferative disease, severe renal failure, and virus infection may all produce abnormal results.

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Book reviews

Basic Haematology An introduction for student medical technologists and assistants. By Arthur Simmons. (Pp. xv + 278; illustrated. \$12.75.). Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1973.

This small book is compiled from the lectures given to student technicians in Iowa and intentionally omits specific technical detail, but includes two colour prints depicting red and white cell maturation that are so bad as to be misleading. When will publishers learn to eschew colour prints of artists' impressions of microscope preparations in haematology? It will serve as a useful introduction at sixth-form or Higher National Certificate level and, indeed, contains a wealth of useful theoretical detail that would do medical students no harm to learn.

It is unfair to compare the cost of American publications with their British counterparts. At \$12.75 this book, lacking technical detail, will have an uphill battle on the English market but it can be recommended for technical college libraries and the larger laboratories responsible for running training courses for student technicians.

J. L. STAFFORD

Pathology of Mental Retardation 2nd ed. By L. Crome and J. Stern. (Pp. vii + 544; illustrated. £9.00.) Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone, 1972.

Mental retardation is a subject which is prominent in the thoughts of many people at this time, so the presentation of a second edition of this book by Drs Crome and Stern is especially welcome. The first edition was received enthusiastically by many, and the new volume brings up to date the contents and discussion of the problems involved, as well as widening the field, for many new conditions have been described.

In addition to 13 chapters there are appendices in which a variety of techniques and methods, of nomenclature on chromosomes, and the collection of material for examination are very well described.

The chapters include aspects relating to genetics, perinatal factors, and post-natal causes of disease, as well as general pathological studies. There are discussions on Down's syndrome, the lipidoses and

leucodystrophies, aminoacidurias, and a variety of other neurometabolic disorders. There is a most valuable chapter listing briefly the many syndromes (206 of them) with comments listing references, genetic, clinical, and pathological findings.

In all there must be over 3000 authors mentioned whose work has quite obviously been studied and to which reference is made.

Naturally there are a few errors such as the wrong reference to a table and the variability in the use of symbols for the various gangliosides. As is to be expected a few articles which may be of some importance are not quoted.

A remarkable number of unusual, unique cases are discussed, yet few statistics are available giving the relative frequency of the various diseases as found in a routine hospital practice.

This volume can be thoroughly recommended to all interested in this subject, especially to paediatric clinicians and to pathologists of all disciplines.

J. N. CUMINGS

Hodgkin's Disease By Henry S. Kaplan. (Pp. xi + 452; illustrated. £8.25.) London: Harvard University Press. Oxford University Press. 1973.

Hodgkin's disease, a condition that is apparently unique to man, has occupied the attention of many of the best pathologists and physicians of the last hundred years. Perhaps we are not much nearer to understanding its cause than was Thomas Hodgkin, but in all other respects knowledge has expanded enormously, especially within the last two decades. In staging and classification the Rye Conference of 1966 was a landmark which should by now be familiar to all pathologists and clinicians who profess to diagnose the disease. For treatment and management the rules are less clearly defined and here there has been even greater progress.

All this, and much besides, is now encompassed in a single, one-author volume by Henry Kaplan. It is an astonishing virtuoso performance, precise yet fluent, detailed but never fussy, and presenting the controversies—on spread of disease and on curability, for example—in an urbane but compelling way. Above all it is authoritative, being the product of first-hand observation and original thought. The excellent tables, diagrams, and illustrations are mostly from the

work of Kaplan and his colleagues. (A seriously misprinted dose has a correction slip and seems to be a solitary error.)

Of course the hazard of a work of this sort is the possibility of personal bias; Kaplan is known to be an enthusiast who may on occasion overlook the ill effects of treatment. Thus when he claims that 'the incidence of incomplete hematopoietic recovery after total-lymphoid radiotherapy alone . . . has been approximately 1 per cent' one is entitled to ask what constitutes complete recovery and whether this includes a normal response to cytotoxic drugs. Probably not. Readers may also wish to see the opposition view to the theory of lymphatic spread presented at first hand. If so, they must wait for the multi-author British volume on the same topic but may, meanwhile, wonder whether it can hope to surpass Kaplan's considerable achievement.

H. E. M. KAY

Hepatitis-Associated Antigen and Viruses

By A. J. Zuckerman. (Pp. approx. 240; illustrated. Dfl. 60.00). Amsterdam and London: North-Holland Publishing Co. 1972.

In writing this book Dr Zuckerman has set himself the ambitious task of producing both a critical review of the now extensive hepatitis literature, and an introduction to the subject within the confines of a single volume. These aims are often conflicting and the resulting compromise lacks balance.

The historical introduction consists mainly of a translation of Lurman's classical account of an outbreak of hepatitis following smallpox vaccination in Bremen. This is supplemented by a catalogue of some of the early observations, but no attempt is made to describe the theoretical concepts current at the time. It is curious to see the recognition of posttransfusion hepatitis attributed to the author (1970).

In the chapters about hepatitis as a disease, clarity has been attained by great simplification of the issues, and too often an earlier review by the author is quoted rather than the original paper.

Scant attention is given to the foreign language literature.

Rather more than half the book is concerned with Australia antigen and this makes interesting reading although the extended exposition of the work from

the author's group has left insufficient space for an overall view of current progress. For instance, a chapter is devoted to attempts to grow hepatitis virus in liver organ cultures at the London School of Hygiene, but room has not been found to acknowledge the early work of Bang in this field.

As might be expected from its price the book is handsomely presented with many illustrations but it seems to the reviewer that the time is not yet ripe for writing a definitive monograph on this rapidly moving subject.

YVONNE E. COSSART,

Computer Diagnosis and Diagnostic Methods:

Proceedings of the Second Conference on the Diagnostic Process. Edited by John A. Jacquez. (Pp. xiv + 397; illustrated. \$19.75.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1972

The 19 read papers in this volume overlap considerably, except for one by a C.I.A. statistician on political espionage rather than the arts of healing. Apart from the papers by Cornfield and Edwards, there is much that is pretentious or completely lacking in medical common-sense. The main problem discussed is estimating betting odds that a patient has a particular disease. They use Bayes' law, which states that a new independent piece of evidence, eg, a biochemical test, multiplies existing odds by a factor which is called the 'likelihood' of that evidence for that disease. Since thousands of different signs, symptoms, and tests and thousands of diseases are possible, we must tell a computer millions of likelihoods before it can use Bayes' law for us, and allowance for the non-independence of different bits of evidence makes things even worse! Except in differential diagnosis of similar diseases, this approach is not of practical value.

RICHARD PETO

Manual of Histopathological Staining Methods

By Frederick A. Putt. (Pp. xxii + 335. £6.20.) New York, Sydney, and Chichester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd. 1973.

This is a useful book and deserves a place on the bookshelf in any routine diagnostic histopathology laboratory. It contains detailed descriptions of a wide variety of staining methods. The layout

is extremely clear and each step in each method is clearly explained thus minimizing the chance of error when a stain is employed for the first time.

M. S. DUNNILL

Books received

Evaluation of Certain Food Additives and the Contaminants Mercury, Lead and Cadmium. Sixteenth Report of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives. WHO Technical Report Series No. 505. (Pp. 32. 40p.) Geneva: World Health Organization. 1972. Available from HM Stationery Office.

Oculomycoses By Jules François and M. Rysselaere. (Pp. xii + 430; illustrated. \$34.50.) Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas. 1972.

Acute Ureteric Obstruction. A Clinical and Radiological Study By P. M. Bretland. (Pp. xv + 219; illustrated. £5.20.) London: Butterworth Group. 1972.

Rehabilitation of the Cancer Patient A collection of Papers presented at the 19th Annual Clinical Conference on Cancer, 1970, at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute at Houston, Houston, Texas. (Pp. x + 326; illustrated. £9.00.) Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers Inc. Distributed in UK and Europe by Lloyd-Luke Medical Books, London. 1972.