

The authors have commented as follows:

We thank Dr Houck for his comments on our article. Dr Houck is, of course, correct—artificial colonisation of the newborn with 'non pathogens' has resulted in serious complications. Our paper was not meant to be a review on artificial colonisation and therefore we did not feel obliged to include all references dealing with this subject, including Dr Houck's case report. Similarly, we did not intend to suggest that artificial colonisation is a panacea devoid of complications or that 'one embarks on bacterial interference with 502A staphylococcus'. Rather we offered our observations as a theoretical basis for the effectiveness of artificial colonisation and suggested that the umbilical stump should be considered a possible target site during artificial colonisation programmes in the newborn nursery.

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Book reviews

Handbuch der allgemeinen Pathologie. Volume 6, Part 8. 'Transplantation'. Edited by J. W. Masshoff. (Pp. xxiii + 1070; illustrated; \$187.) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1977.

Handbuch der allgemeinen Pathologie is the overall title for a series of some 30 books, each of which deals with some aspect of pathology. The volume being reviewed is concerned exclusively with transplantation and contains 18 chapters all written in English by authors from six countries, including seven from the USA and two from the UK. Eight chapters are devoted to the basic biology of transplantation, and 10 of them to the more applied aspects of the subject, including clinical organ transplantation and the various methods of achieving immunosuppression.

The opening chapters are beautiful summaries of our knowledge of the major histocompatibility complex, but inevitably since they were written a lot has happened and even some of the terminology has altered. There is a very clear exposition on the phylogeny and ontogeny of transplantation. Humoral and cell-mediated mechanisms of allograft rejection are then discussed, as are the various antigen-induced states of inhibition of the immune response. Later chapters deal with the transplantation of organs, including the kidneys, liver and heart, and various tissues such as bone marrow, skin, cornea, and bone. The modifications of the immune response to grafts brought about by radiation, antilymphocyte serum, and various drugs are fully considered, including the adverse effects these agents may produce. The final chapter is concerned with reactions that the graft may cause against the host.

The main disadvantages of this book are, firstly, its sheer size (it weighs 6 lb), secondly, that there is some unnecessary duplication of information while certain aspects of the vast subject of transplantation are incompletely covered, and thirdly, the evident delays in publication with the result that not many chapters have more than a few references dated as recently as 1975.

However, this book is well produced and well illustrated with black-and-white figures and is an important source of references for those concerned with tissue and organ transplantation. Most of the

contributors are acknowledged leaders in their respective areas and deal with their subjects in an informative and interesting way; some are outstanding. For these reasons medical libraries should possess a copy. For the individual, even a transplantation enthusiast, the price will probably be prohibitive. K. A. PORTER

Major Problems in Internal Medicine. Volume XIV. 'The Eosinophil'. By Paul B. Beeson and David A. Bass. (Pp. xii + 269; illustrated; £10.50.) Philadelphia, London, Toronto: W. B. Saunders. 1977.

The eosinophil has fascinated but puzzled scientists for years. This is reflected in the vast literature on the subject. Recently, a few chinks of light have appeared, which suggest some of the functional roles this cell may play. Beeson and Bass are both eosinophil experts and have digested the massive literature thoroughly, sorting the wood from the trees. In normal circumstances a monograph on such a specialised subject might be considered to be of interest to only a minority of readers of the *Journal of Clinical Pathology*. However, the text is so well written that it is a delightful book to read. Any pathologist who comes up against the eosinophil from time to time and who wishes to flex his intellectual muscles painlessly should try to get hold of a copy.

I. C. M. MACLENNAN

Current Chemotherapy, Volumes I and II. Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Chemotherapy. Edited by W. Siegenthaler and R. Lüthy. (Pp. xxiv + 1361; \$75 for the two-volume set.) Washington: American Society for Microbiology. 1978.

Few would dispute that the chief value of international meetings lies in the informal contacts and discussions that take place outside the auditoria. The value of publishing conference proceedings is often less clear, but whatever the reason, the end result is usually rather unsatisfactory: a deluge of data packed into short, enigmatic abstracts or rambling, untidy reports of work which will be published again elsewhere.

The supposed object of congresses and their published proceedings, of course, is to provide a multivoiced statement of the global 'state of play' in a particular field of endeavour. Viewed in this optimistic way, the Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Chemotherapy ranks

rather better than average. Furthermore, the publishers, the American Society for Microbiology, have produced it with admirable speed and efficiency and have managed to keep the size down to less than 1400 pages, distributed between two volumes. This considerable achievement (the Proceedings of the 9th Congress ran to 8 volumes) has been accomplished by summarising each of the 26 main symposia in a few pages and electing to publish free papers as extended (generally two-page) abstracts. This format, which keeps the contributions succinct but reasonably meaningful, is rather successful and highly recommended to others planning to publish large symposia.

Of their kind, then, these volumes are uncommonly successful and will remain the standard work of reference until, in little over a year, the ephemera of Zürich are drowned in a new tidal wave of data from the 11th International Congress.

D. GREENWOOD

Recent Advances in Clinical Biochemistry. Number 1. Edited by K. G. M. M. Alberti. (Pp. viii + 298; illustrated; £13.00.) Edinburgh, London, New York: Churchill Livingstone. 1978.

The 'Recent Advances' series is well established in many specialities and indeed in Pathology has run to nine editions. It is suprising, therefore, that the publishers have only just chosen to include clinical biochemistry in the series. This first volume is a welcome addition and will be of great interest not only to laboratory workers but also to colleagues working in other disciplines.

The standard of review throughout is high, and the choice of subjects covered shows wise editorial decisions. There are chapters on growing points, such as intracellular chemical pathology and the use of stable isotopes in investigative medicine, but more everyday matters such as laboratory organisation, computers, and laboratory automation (including the viewpoint of a manufacturer) are included. A chapter on the forensic analysis of drugs and poisons includes clear descriptions of equipment and methodologies used. The clinical aspects are not neglected: hyperlipoproteinaemia and thyroid function tests are discussed in a stimulating fashion.

This book is valuable to all grades of pathologists working in chemical pathology laboratories but those studying for

postgraduate examinations would be foolish to neglect this book. They should consider themselves fortunate to be able to find so much information lucidly reviewed and reasonably priced. They should buy their own copies and not rely on the departmental library.

BRENDA M. SLAVIN

Molecules, Cells, and Disease: An Introduction to the Biology of Disease. By Julien L. van Lancker. (Pp. xv + 311; illustrated; \$14.80.) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1977.

For the undergraduate approaching the clinical portion of his curriculum or the scientifically educated layman, who wishes to be informed about current concepts of disease processes and the historical route by which these concepts were derived, this book can be thoroughly recommended. The contents are fully outlined in the rather cumbersome title and the approach is refreshingly multidisciplinary. It could well be prescribed reading for junior staff at the beginning of each new academic year.

On the debit side the chapter on the pathology of cell membranes, admittedly a difficult subject to simplify, lacks the clarity and appeal of the other chapters. Further, certain of the diagrams, such as the schematic representation of the histology of tuberculosis and the morbid anatomical appearances of cerebral haemorrhage have been over-simplified to the point of being almost uninformative. These, however, are minor shortcomings in what is an engrossing introductory book.

F. WALKER

Immunochemistry: An Advanced Textbook. Edited by L. E. Glynn and M. W. Steward. (Pp. x + 628; illustrated; £24.00.) Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto: John Wiley and Sons. 1977.

It is a surprising fact that no comprehensive textbook on immunochemistry has been available in the past. Generally, immunoglobulin structure and genetics based on immunoglobulin synthesis have been dealt with in chapters on broader aspects of immunology.

Immunoglobulins can fairly be classified as the most complex and poly-functional of the proteins known to man. Apart from the fascination of the diverse nature of the antigen-combining sites

in the variable regions there are multiple functional structures in the constant regions so that, for instance, IgA can independently interact with the complement system, neutrophils, macrophages, K cells, platelets, eosinophils, and basophils.

Analysis of the structure of immunoglobulins has meant that many of the conventional theories of genetic coding for protein structure have had to be revised.

Glynn and Steward have succeeded in persuading some of the best authorities in the various aspects of immunochemistry to contribute to this book. It is certainly a necessary volume for any immunologist's bookshelf. However, many pathologists in other specialities who become involved with immunoglobulins in either radioimmunoassay or microbial diagnosis will find this a useful reference book.

I. C. M. MACLENNAN

Major Problems in Pathology. Volume 8. 'Use and Interpretation of Renal Biopsy'. By G. E. Striker, L. J. Quadracci, and R. E. Cutler. (Pp. xiii + 347; illustrated; £17.50.) Philadelphia, London, Toronto: W. B. Saunders. 1978.

This book provides a concise, well-written account of those diseases in which renal biopsy may be helpful either in establishing a diagnosis and prognosis or in estimating progression. It is based upon the author's experience of about 4000 biopsies collected from patients of all ages from the Seattle area of the USA over an 18-year period.

The material is organised under five main headings: renal diseases of acute onset, slowly progressive renal diseases, the nephrotic syndrome, renal diseases associated with systemic syndromes, and transplantation. For each disease process within these categories the morphology is described in detail and generously illustrated with clear half-tone light and electron micrographs and, where useful, fluorescence micrographs. The light micrographs are all of plastic-embedded material. In many instances there is also a small diagram emphasising the important changes. The clinical presentation, course, and prognosis of each condition are given.

There is advice on the indications, contra-indications, complications, and technique of renal biopsy and on the