Book reviews

Standard Operating Procedures in Pathology. Ed GE Paget and R Thomson. (Pp xvi + 514; illustrated; £39.) MTP Press. 1979.

No, this book is not a universal guide to laboratory medicine, nor is it concerned with pathology as a scientific discipline. It is the manual of practical procedures employed by one British contract research firm which was compiled to satisfy the 'Good Laboratory Practices' regulations of the US Food and Drug Administration, a curious attempt to legislate for accuracy in toxicity testing. The regulations have made it necessary to describe in full how safety studies are done, and this book lists methods used at Inveresk Research International to check the health of animals, to conduct necropsies on common species, to collect and process tissues for histological examination, for experiments in reproductive toxicology, and to obtain samples for biochemical and haematological tests. It also describes the operations of the Quality Assurance Unit, which is required to confirm the veracity of results (but demonstrably not of proof reading).

The details of procedures are inadequate for the book to be of general use at the bench, and in any case a laboratory would be better served by writing its own manual as a blend of experience and local practice. The overall value of this work appears limited, except perhaps to demonstrate the contortions of science under political pressure.

AD DAYAN

Blood Diseases of Infancy and Childhood. 4th ed. Ed DR Miller, HA Pearson, R Baehner, and C McMillan. (Pp xxv + 888; illustrated; DM 68, US $34.) YB Medical Publishers. 1978.

As in earlier editions, this is an encyclopaedic tome. There can be few facts related to paediatric, or indeed adult, haematology that are not to be found somewhere. There is a historical introduction by Louis Diamond. Denis Miller, Howard Pearson, Robert Baehner, and Campbell McMillan are joint editors, the latter two covering the chapters on leucocytes and haemostasis respectively. There are 10 other contributors. Philip Lanzkowsky's chapters on iron deficiency and megaloblastic anaemia are particularly valuable, as are also the three early chapters covering neonatal, developmental, and fetomaternal aspects. The details given in the description of marrow aspiration and trephine in children have a 'ring of truth' that can only come from an experienced practitioner. In later sections of the book, Baehner's chapter on granulocyte dysfunction reads like a monograph on the subject, and in his chapter on leukaemia the availability of CCSG data is a valuable addition. Margaret Hilgartner contributes to the chapter on haemophilia, which rightly emphasises the value of home therapy as well as including a useful set of *x*-rays defining the five stages of haemophilic arthropathy. Other chapters deal with lymphomas and with immunodeficiency.

Are there any imperfections in this book? Probably only those that are inevitable in a multi-author treatise. There are some duplications in different sections. By testing out the book to see if it will resolve day-to-day clinical problems one finds that with this abundance of facts and erudition the 'wood' may sometimes be obscured by the 'trees'. For instance, there are eight pages of tabulated haemoglobin variants, although usefully classified according to involved chain.

Regarding illustrations, there are a number of familiar figures to be seen here that other authors have similarly felt succinctly gave the facts. This is no criticism. As in other books, the colour photomicrographs suffer from their inevitable small size, and it is the larger black-and-white photomicrographs, for example, those of neuroblastoma cells in marrow, as well as the numerous EM micrographs, that prove more informative.

I can recommend this book to all medical libraries.

MLN WILLOUGHBY

Hodgkin's Disease and the Lymphomas. Vol 3. CR Taylor. (Pp iv + 437; £16·50.) Churchill Livingstone. 1979.

In the introduction to this book Dr Taylor states that it is his 'avowed intention to conduct each year a similar survey of the new literature pertaining to lymphoid neoplasia in the hope that this will prove of some value and practical use to those who, like myself, have developed an absorbing interest in this area of research'. The text and the bibliography is based on the 12 volumes of the *Index Medicus* for 1977 and restricted essentially to those papers published in the English language. Even with this restriction over 1500 papers are reviewed (Volume 1 of this series based on the 1975 *Index Medicus* contained over 1000 references). It is not surprising, therefore, that Dr Taylor has enlisted the aid of nine of his colleagues in preparing the latest volume. If the present exponential increase in publications continues and Dr Taylor manages to stay on top of his task this will be a two-volume publication in a few years' time!

The chapters in the present volume cover basic lymphocyte physiology, surface marker studies, mitogen responses, immunohistochemistry, electron microscopy, cytochemistry and cytogenetics of normal, reactive, and neoplastic lymphoid populations, as well as the clinical and pathological aspects of Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphomas, and various other lymphoproliferative disorders. The dilemma faced when preparing a review of this nature is whether to impose one's own views and run the risk of being accused of bias or whether to give equal emphasis to all the papers reviewed and hazard the accusation of superficiality. If anything, the authors have erred in the latter direction, and in some sections one might wish for a more critical evaluation of papers. Several articles that appeared to be important from reading this book were, when looked up, found to be trivial or downright poor. Conversely, many sections in the book reflect the sympathies of the University of Southern California workers in this area, perhaps not too surprisingly since this group have contributed so many papers to the literature on lymphomas over the past five years. Taylor himself is first author of eight papers reviewed in this issue. It is perhaps unfortunate that this group has published the hypothetical maturation sequence of follicular centre cells from the cleaved to the non-cleaved cells so