Book reviews

Cerebrospinal Fluid in Diseases of the Nervous System. RA Fishman. (Pp 384; illustrated; £18.25.) WB Saunders. 1980.

Professor Fishman's book fulfils a great need in the medical literature, there being no other authoritative and detailed treatise on the abnormal, CSF in disease. This is a comprehensive work covering the anatomy, physiology, and the normal and abnormal CSF. The sections on pathophysiology and intracranial hypertension are a particularly noteworthy contribution. A wide range of constituents in the CSF are considered in detail, and there is inclusion of much useful recent information from the literature with a wide but prudently selective bibliography taken from the vast literature of original papers now available. With advantage, perhaps more attention could have been given to the various patterns of abnormality in the CSF, which are present at different stages of the commoner disorders, together with more discussion of these in relation to differential diagnosis in terms of CSF findings considered in conjunction with clinical presentations.

A full account is given of the indications, contraindications, and technique of lumbar puncture with appropriate references to the important differences among lumbar, cisternal, and ventricular CSF, but this book contains no details of laboratory procedures. All aspects of the CSF including chemistry, bacteriology, and cytology are included, but emphasis is on the chemistry.

The book will be warmly welcomed as an interpretative manual in both hospital wards and laboratories alike.

PT LASCELLES

Haematological Cytochemistry. FGJ Hayhoe and D Quaglini. (Pp vi + 320; illustrated; £32.) Churchill Livingstone. 1980.

The contribution made by Frank Hayhoe and Dennis Quaglini to the cytochemical classification of the acute leukaemias is well known to all concerned with the care of patients with leukaemia and arose from their collaborative work in Cambridge in the early 1960s. Their more recent collaboration, in the production of this authoritative book on the cytochemistry of blood and bone marrow cells in man, is to be particularly welcomed since no equivalent monograph of this standing exists.

Each section describes the historical development, chemical basis, and clinical application of cytochemical methods of proven value, and the more commonly used methods are described in a technical appendix. The biological significance of a cytochemical reaction is sometimes difficult to interpret, and the text is particularly useful in explaining, or debating, the metabolic basis of individual reactions. With a few exceptions, the emphasis is very much on standard chromogenic reactions rather than on electron or immuno-cytochemistry.

This book, with some quite outstanding colour illustrations, will become an important reference source for all laboratory workers who perform or interpret cytochemical reactions on haemic cells and should also act as a stimulus to further research.

J STUART

Clinical Histocompatibility Testing. Vol 4. 'A Transplantation Proceedings Reprint'. December 1979. Ed CB Carpenter. (Pp 316; illustrated; \$32.50.) Grune and Stratton. 1980.

This book is a record of the 1979 meeting of the American Association for Clinical Histocompatibility Testing. Eleven clearly defined chapters cover recent advances in transplantation genetics and immunology. The genetics and the immunochemistry of HLA sections include studies on the use of somatic cell hybrids in the investigation of cell surface antigens and in the production of monoclonal antibodies. HLA-DR antigens are well represented in two sections, and further evidence for the existence of a second B-cell locus separate from the DR locus is presented. Associations of HLA with disease and with the immune response and the relationship between HLA and red blood cell and non-HLA lymphocyte antigens are adequately represented. New methods in histocompatibility are discussed in detail, and recent advances in renal and bone-marrow transplantation are also presented.

This book should be welcomed by technicians and clinicians as a valuable reference source of recent developments in histocompatibility, and the emphasis on the clinical application of the HLA system is of particular interest.

ELIZABETH H JONES

Factors affecting Analytical Performance in clinical chemistry laboratories. Report of a working party sponsored by the Nuffield Provincial Hospital Trust, April 1980. (Pp 52; illustrated.) Reprints obtainable from Miss Patricia Knid, Department of Clinical Chemistry, St Thomas' Hospital, London SE1 7EW.

With financial backing from the Nuffield Provincial Hospital Trust, the Royal College of Pathologists convened a Working Party, including nominees from the Association of Clinical Biochemists and the Institute of Medical Laboratory Sciences, to survey a representative sample of laboratories participating in the UK National Quality Control Scheme in clinical chemistry in order to determine which factors contributed the consistently good or bad analytical performance.

This unique and thorough study shows that the majority of factors associated with a low 'running overall mean variance index score' are statistically related to size, larger laboratories tending to have the best performance. Laboratories which perform badly tend to have a low investment in equipment and calibration sera, less awareness of quality control, a small workload, and a relatively small staff with no chemical pathologist or biochemist in administrative charge.

Understandably, this report with its numerous tables, figures, and statistical lists of significance makes for heavy reading but it could be read with profit by all concerned with the provision of pathology services.

FV FLYNN

A Colour Atlas of Bone Disease. Victor Parsons. (Pp 112; illustrated; £14.) Wolfe Medical Publications Limited. 1980.

I was surprised by my reaction to this book. Jolly in its appearance—orange cover, black print, colour pictures on the hard cover; nice in the hand—slender but of generous page size; well produced—good binding, fine not too glossy paper, well laid out pages (someone worked hard at letting each page declare its pattern:) it has positive impact. Some illustrations lack definition, specimen photographs and x-rays suffering from reduction, although the photomicrographs stand up well. These are important considerations in an atlas. But no, the looking is all right.