

Anaerobic Bacteriology Manual. 3rd ed. VL Sutter, DM Citron, SM Finegold, and KS Bricknell. (Pp 131; illustrated; £5.50.) YB Medical Publishers Ltd. 1980.

This is the third edition of one of a number of similar anaerobe manuals published in the USA. It is attractively presented and easy to read, and presents the methods and tests employed at the Wadsworth Medical Centre, California. Although there is much helpful information in this little book, there are a number of surprises for the UK reader. Thus, on the one hand one is envious of the ease with which anaerobic cocci can be identified; on the other it is surprising to find *Clostridium novyi* type A tabulated among the Nagler-negative clostridia, and the gelatinase activity of *Ci bifementans* and *Ci sordellii* not recorded. Very few British clinical microbiologists will find themselves in agreement with the list of specimens whose anaerobic culture is positively not recommended, nor will they be greatly impressed by the methods recommended for the detection of proteolysis (culture in chopped meat medium or whole milk), of gelatinase activity (exposure of Pan-X (Kodak) film to bacterial suspensions), or of motility determination (hanging drop). Not surprisingly in a text published in the USA the nitroimidazoles are not mentioned. The text is usefully supported by 136 end-references, although the literature cited is almost exclusively of American origin.

AT WILLIS

Electron Microscopy in Human Medicine. Ed JV Johannessen. Vol 6. (Pp 454; illustrated; £31.05.) Vol 9. (Pp 456; illustrated; £30.85.) McGraw-Hill Book Company (UK) Limited. 1980.

Here are two more volumes of this truly 'magnum opus' in 11 parts. Volume 6 covers the nervous system, the eye, inner ear, and the respiratory tract, and Volume 9 includes the urogenital system (kidney, lower urinary tract, male genitalia, female genital tract, placenta), and breast.

With 42 contributors the text is somewhat variable although the standard is generally high. There are plentiful illustrations of both scanning and transmission electron micrographs. There are enough references for each chapter to enable one to pursue any particular subject in greater depth. Many of the chapters give a brief review of normal

structure as well as a good variety of pathology, and as the title suggests the discussions are not confined to 'diagnostic' EM features but provide a general extension of histopathology to the ultra-structural level.

JULIE CROW

Preleukemia. Ed F Schmalzl and KP Hellriegel. (Pp 194; 64 figs; 59 tables; DM 48; US \$26.90.) Springer-Verlag, Berlin. 1979.

This covers the proceedings of a two-day workshop on this topic, held in Innsbruck in 1979. It is an excellent updated account of the clinico-haematological spectrum of disorders encompassed by the term 'preleukaemia'.

In general the disease descriptions and the differential diagnosis from conditions regarded either as not preleukaemic or as true myeloid leukaemia are well defined. The book describes the morphological and cytochemical aspects in detail and, in addition, has many papers dealing with growing research areas, chiefly bone marrow cultures.

The papers are followed by edited discussions, which I found useful, and there is also a good round table discussion of the tests which are of value for differential diagnosis and for predicting leukaemic evolution. Three investigations appear to be of value for the latter: assessment of the percentage of blast cells in the bone marrow, the pattern of growth in semi-solid cultures, and the presence of chromosome abnormalities. Additional features are the presence of circulating blasts, the degree of pancytopenia, and the involvement of more than one bone marrow cell line. Some consensus appears to exist regarding the cases with a low risk of developing acute leukaemia, eg aplastic and sideroblastic anaemias, and those with a high risk, eg those with readily demonstrable blast cells. The problems of treatment were discussed, although no new data were presented. A key question remains: are normal stem cells still present when preleukaemia develops, and if so, can they repopulate the bone marrow once the leukaemic clone is ablated? Observations of lower response rates in the so-called secondary acute leukaemias, often preceded by a preleukaemic phase, suggest that the bone marrow is radically affected in some patients.

This book should be a good addition to any haematological library. It will remain useful for some years unless rapid developments in the field require the organisation of a new workshop.

D CATOVSKY

Notices

Light Microscopy—Conference and Exhibition 1981

This conference, organised by the Royal Microscopical Society, will be held at Imperial College, London on 7-9 July 1981. For information, please write to the Administrator, 37-8 St Clements, Oxford OX4 1AJ.

6th International Symposium on Atherosclerosis

This symposium, organised by the International Atherosclerosis Society, will be held at the International Congress Centre, Berlin, West-Berlin on 14-18 June 1982. Topics include: clinical aspects, epidemiology, prevention and treatment, childhood atherosclerosis, and basic research. For information, please write to the General Secretary: Prof Dr G Schlierf, c/o Medizinische Univ. Klinik, 58 Bergheimer-Strasse, D-6900 Heidelberg, West Germany.