

**Basic Concepts of Hemostasis and Thrombosis.** Clinical and Laboratory Evaluation of Thrombohemorrhagic Phenomena. Eds G Murano and RL Bick. (Pp 292; illustrated; £51.25.) Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1980.

An unusual book with many simple and excellent tables, graphs, and charts, it includes information that is surprisingly up-to-date and beautifully set out; the authors and the publishers are to be congratulated. The book is divided into three sections: physiology and biochemistry of haemostasis, clinical disorders of haemostasis, and hypercoagulability, thrombosis, and therapy. The last two sections reflect the authors' bias: for example, there are only four pages on classical haemophilia, but nine on the alterations of haemostasis with malignancy! As the authors say in the preface that this is a book for general physicians 'often burdened with the awesome responsibility of diagnosing and treating thrombohaemorrhagic syndrome', the bias is possibly justified. A few details, such as monitoring of the anticoagulant therapy are incorrect, at least according to the usual British and European approach.

The price is prohibitive for individuals, but the book will be a useful and interesting addition to any library.

MILICA BROZOVIĆ

**Prostate Cancer.** UICC Technical Report Series Vol 48—A series of Workshops on the Biology of Human Cancer—Report No 9—Ed DS Coffey and JT Isaacs. (Pp 289; illustrated; Sw fr 20.) UICC, Geneva. 1979.

The first stated purpose of the workshop on which this report is based is to 'discuss the present status and future directions of research designed to develop new methods of controlling prostate cancer'. Clearly such a goal is impossible if the current role and possible future developments in surgery, pathology, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, immunology, tumour markers and other possible methods of prostate cancer detection, treatment, and staging are ignored. In the event the workshop concentrated on the role of hormones and steroid receptors in the development and control of prostate cancer. In addition, consideration was given to two of the potential model systems available, tissue/organ culture and animal models, but did not discuss xenografts. The general aim

of individual chapters was to review particular areas of research with respect to questions that are being, could be, and should be asked, with reference to the limitations of the techniques available. These criteria were achieved particularly well in the four chapters written by the editors, and in that discussing organ culture. Some of the other chapters were not equally objective, resulting in an inadequate analysis of the 'state of the art'. This criticism applies in particular to the chapter devoted to tissue culture, which concentrates on a cell line, EB33, which is contaminated with HeLa cells and therefore of dubious value in the study of prostate cancer.

Though the stated purpose of the report is not wholly achieved, its contents provide a valuable critical analysis of developments and future prospects in particular fields not available elsewhere and these are highly commended. The contribution made by the editors make this book a valuable addition to the literature on hormonal aspects of prostatic cancer.

RCB PUGH

**Handbook of Emergency Toxicology.** A guide for the identification, diagnosis and treatment of poisoning. 4th ed. Sidney Kaye. (Pp 565; illustrated; \$54.75.) Charles C Thomas. 1980.

This is no book for the clinician, at least not for the British clinician. A brave attempt is made to embrace toxicology by depicting virtually every conceivable poison, its action, and its cure. The result is an immense series of maybe succinct accounts covering each substance or group, with correspondingly unavoidable over-simplification. Attention to what is written may well deter the unenlightened physician from acting stupidly, but it will hardly offer him those details of clinical management that can be so critical. What is more, in parts it is not up to date; a defect of any hard-backed medical text.

On the other hand the laboratory sections which are of more attraction to clinical chemists are much more informative. The procedures described are sound, well-tryed, and invaluable. Let it not be thought, however, as the preface tends to imply that armed by a modicum of equipment and by following these directions, any clinical chemist can set up as a toxicological reference laboratory. 'One-off' tests of this sort can easily lead to unreliable results. Besides interpretation in practice is nothing like so clear-cut as

might be suggested. Still as an occasional reference to be taken down from the laboratory shelf, many analytical chemists in the hospital will find this very useful.

R GOULDING

**1980 Year Book of Pathology and Clinical Pathology.** Ed FA Carone and RB Conn. Year Book Medical Publishers Ltd. 1980.

Year books relieve one of guilt. The guilt of dropping journal subscriptions and for failing to scan 'Current Contents'. As usual the editors of this volume review a wide range of articles organised according to speciality with an equal split between pathology and clinical pathology. In the latter section between 20 to 30 papers are reviewed in each discipline, and within this framework most sub-specialities receive attention eg blood banking, histocompatibility testing, laboratory data processing, etc. The synopses of the selected papers are excellent some 300 to 400 words long and presented with illustrations and diagrams where necessary. Perhaps of equal value are the initialled editorial comments that follow each review. These may take the form of discussions as long again as the review or just be curt sentences eg 'This makes sense'. The style of comment provides an interesting insight into the individuals on the editorial panel. However even to attempt a choice of key articles from the oceans of annual literature in pathology is a task that might 'make no sense' to some. It is to the editors' credit that this choice in the subjects with which I am best acquainted was good although understandably limited.

AB PRICE

**Essays on the History of the Microscope.** GL'E Turner. (Pp 248; illustrated; £14.95.) Senecio Publishing Company Limited. 1980.

To the growing band of pathologists whose interest in the future, pensions apart, is diminishing, and whose interest in the past is correspondingly increasing, this book will have its attractions (cf RC Path. on 'Staffing Crisis in Pathology'). One man's papers on historical aspects of microscopy deliver a message of the development of the microscope as a scientific instrument, and its decline as an *objet d'art*. In the nineteenth century 'we bought British', with objectives devised by Lister, illustrious father of a famous son, and

elegant slim-line instruments made by Powell and Lealand. The NA of objectives achieved their theoretical limits, reaching 0.97 in air in 1851 and 1.5 in oil by 1896. Since then this perfection may have decreased as electron microscopy now provides our high resolution in the same way that it has replaced staining methods for what we used to call intracellular organelles.

Being previously published papers, the chapters do not flow as well as those of a book. Many of the figures are repeated; one appears three times. Almost £15 for a paper-back (euphemistically called limp cover) is a bit steep for a private purse but a monochromatic library copy will provide an evening of pleasant escape from colour television.

RAB DRURY

**Cell Potassium.** RP Kernam. (Pp 200; illustrated; £17.70.) John Wiley and Sons. 1980.

Cell Potassium is the first of a series dealing with transport in the life sciences and sets a high standard of scholarship. Its author, who is Professor of physiology at University College Dublin and an authority in the field of electrogenesis of electrolyte transport, reviews recent studies of the movement, distribution and role of potassium ion in a wide variety of tissues and cells. Topics covered include assimilation of potassium from the environment, measurement of cellular potassium, potassium equilibrium in the resting cell, potassium fluxes and the action potential, active transport of potassium in epithelial tissues and non-epithelial cells, potassium fluxes in mitochondria, the role of potassium ions in cellular metabolism and the relationships with acid-base balance. Each aspect is dealt with in a critical manner but the depth of cover is variable.

This book is really for cell biologists, biophysicists, and physiologists and contains relatively little of immediate relevance to the everyday practice of clinical pathology. Chemical pathologists and clinical investigators in search of a fundamental understanding of the handling of potassium by cells will find that it provides a readable means of bringing themselves up to date.

FV FLYNN

**Centrifugal Analysers in Clinical Chemistry.** Ed Christopher P Price and Kevin Spencer. (Pp 506; illustrated; £28.50.) WB Saunders Ltd. 1980.

This book is the first of a series on methods in laboratory medicine, and is based on the proceedings of a three day symposium held at Southampton in September 1979. Of the 60 contributors 32 are from the UK and 21 from the USA. They include some well known names. Five chapters deal with the introduction of the technology, four with immunoassay applications, six with enzyme and substrate assays, five with the role of the centrifugal analyser and four with future developments; the remainder deal with a variety of topics which were covered in short papers. Edited discussion and references are included. The basic concepts of centrifugal analysers, the advances that have been made in the instrumentation and a wide range of applications are comprehensively reviewed, albeit with some duplication. The contributions are of variable quality but the potential value of this instrument comes over clearly.

The editors and publishers are to be congratulated on the speedy publication of this volume which should form essential reading for all who are contemplating either the purchase of a versatile high-throughput analyser or taking the MCB or MRCPATH examinations. It is recommended for the departmental library.

FV FLYNN

**Microbial Diseases 1980 Edition.** Ed Carl W May. (Pp 300; illustrated; \$7.95 paper-back; \$14.00 hard cover.) William Kaufmann Inc. 1980.

This publication is a very laudable attempt to try to bridge the gap which exists between reports in journals and authoritative accounts in standard textbooks. It presents selected articles and reports from the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report published by the Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, and covers bacterial, viral, fungal and protozoal infections. These are collected in chapters by diseases and many items include succinct editorial notes and comments. Data on the incidence of infectious disease throughout the United States are included up to 1978 and the detailed accounts cover a period from 1977 to early 1980. The data are entirely American and the individual items very largely so, but mention

is made of interesting infections and outbreaks in other parts of the world.

This is an informative and rewarding book and must make valuable reading to the examination candidate in microbiology and to anyone trying to keep up to date with events in infectious disease.

GL GIBSON

**International Histological Classification of Tumours.** No 21. Histological Typing of Tumours of the Central Nervous System. KJ Zülch. (Pp 66; 122 colour plates; Sw Fr 208 with colour plates; Sw Fr 49 book only.) World Health Organization. 1979.

The classification of central nervous system tumours has long presented a problem and in recent years the main aim has been to simplify the nomenclature. This WHO book sets out a very practical classification with descriptive notes and illustrations depicting the wide variety of central nervous system tumours. All the illustrations are in colour and most of them are of good quality. Common and rare tumours are well represented.

There are a few minor criticisms which may be a matter of personal opinion and preference. One relates to the question of grading of central nervous tissue tumours which was first instituted by Kernohan. Many of the disadvantages of the grading system are listed in the introductory chapter but, throughout the descriptions of the tumours, the grading system is maintained apparently for the benefit of the surgeons. Unfortunately the method of grading is not clearly defined so that a system which implies an increase in the accuracy of diagnosis tends to be used in a vague and apparently arbitrary fashion throughout an otherwise very informative text. There are also some areas where the terminology could be improved. Schwannomas are called neurilemmomas but as there is no such cell as a neurilemmal cell this seems a rather archaic term. Similar lack of modernisation is seen in the section on Primary Lymphomas where the terms used are not in line with the modern lymphoma classification.

Despite the few minor criticisms this book should be an essential volume on any pathologist's shelf.

RO WELLES