

Book reviews

The Prostatic Cell: Structure and Function.

Parts A & B. Eds GP Murphy, AA Sandberg, and JP Karr. Part A: Morphologic, Secretory, and Biochemical Aspects. Progress in Clinical and Biological Research, Vol 75A. (Pp 538; illustrated; £54.40.) Part B: Prolactin, Carcinogenesis, and Clinical Aspects. Progress in Clinical and Biological Research, Vol 75B. (Pp 380; illustrated; £40.70.) Alan R Liss Inc. 1981.

The US National Cancer Institute supports programmes concerned with specific cancers in order to stimulate research. These two volumes are the products of a Workshop in March 1981 and published in November 1981. The objective of the Workshop was to "cover aspects of prostatic morphology, physiology, biochemistry, and pathology that had not been explored in depth at previous meetings of a similar nature."

The wide range of topics covered is impressive and shows how molecular and cell biologists are now beginning to apply techniques established in other fields to the prostate. Perhaps the moral here is that scientists have discovered that if money is available for studies on the prostate it might make sense to use rat prostate rather than rat liver! There are several excellent short reviews on subjects now of great interest to cell scientists on, for example, the nuclear matrix, the cytoskeleton and the role of the basal lamina in cell attachment, growth and differentiation, all of which emphasise the point that prostatic cells are basically similar to all other cells, their hormone dependence being only a minor although striking modulating factor. Most of the other papers deal with the structure and function of unique prostate proteins, prostatic secretion, trace metals in the prostate, and chromosomes. Volume 2 deals extensively with prolactin and briefly with experimental carcinogenesis. The final section on clinical studies is perhaps more accurately described as "studies which may (perhaps) have clinical applications". On balance, this is a useful reference book for those concerned with basic research on the prostate but it is not likely to be of immediate significance to a busy clinician or pathologist.

LM FRANKS

Actinomycetes. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium on Actinomycete Biology. Eds KP Schaal and G Pulverer. (Pp 600; illustrated; DM 220.) Gustav Fischer Verlag. 1981.

This supplement of the *Zentralblatt für Bakteriologie* contains the Proceedings of the fourth International Symposium on Actinomycete Biology which was held in Cologne in 1979. It provides a comprehensive survey of the present state of knowledge in this field, and contains both reviews and original reports. Chapter headings (numbers of individual papers in parenthesis) include taxonomy (16), morphology (5), ecology (6), pathogenicity and immunology (7), physiology (9), biochemistry (9), biosynthesis (17), and genetics (9).

Accumulation of information on actinomycetes in the past decade has been rapid, and this volume contains a wealth of information: more than 1600 references are cited. The range of topics is very wide, covering restricted studies of individual biosynthetic pathways and more general review articles.

Despite late publication (more than two years after the symposium) and high cost (more than £50), this volume is of great value in bringing together, in a single volume, so many different focal topics dealing with the biology of actinomycetes.

DWR MACKENZIE

Medical Laboratory Statistics. Institute of Medical Laboratory Sciences Monographs. Paul W Strike. (Pp 203; illustrated; £5.75 paperback.) John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1981.

A relatively painless introduction to the statistical methods most often needed in the analysis of laboratory data is given in this pocket-sized book. However, it is not a "cook book" in that there is plenty of discussion of the reasoning behind most of the techniques described. The content is rather different from that of most competitors, through the inclusion of detailed discussion of topics such as reference ranges, quality, multiple regression, discriminant analysis, and method comparison studies (this being the last and most difficult chapter), and makes this book particularly suited to the intended readership. Missing are the two-sample *t* test (in favour of a non-parametric test), χ^2 tests, and analysis

of variance, but several important aspects of statistical analysis are included that are not usually found in introductory texts, such as calculation of sample size, data transformation, and plotting of residuals. This book can be recommended for medical laboratory scientists.

DG ALTMAN

Introduction to Oral Immunology. AE Dolby, DM Walker, and N Matthews. (Pp 102; illustrated; paperback £5.95.) Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd. 1981.

The authors identify the need for an introductory text on the oral aspects of immunology and meet this need admirably. Although a basic knowledge of immunological principles is assumed, the authors manage cleverly to revise many of these within the text. Excellent brief, but balanced accounts are provided of the immunology of dental caries, pulp and periapical conditions; periodontal disease; immunity and neoplasia, and candidosis. Ulcerative and bullous lesions are dealt with rather briefly; no mention is made of acute ulcero-membranous gingivitis. Consideration is lacking of mucosal lesions such as lupus erythematosus and of salivary gland lesions. These are however minor criticisms of a most readable account which should be of value not only to undergraduates but also to postgraduates both for those studying for further qualifications and those who merely want to update their knowledge.

D GORDON MACDONALD

Therapeutic Drug Monitoring. Eds A Richens and V Marks. (Pp 528; illustrated; £20.) Churchill Livingstone. 1981.

Therapeutic Drug Monitoring is a timely publication and is one of those laboratory-clinical developments that have caught on. For the progressively minded physician it is a means of putting practical therapeutics on a sound footing, and for the clinical chemistry/clinical pharmacology laboratory this elaboration offers opportunity for expansion and for getting finance for long-awaited new analytical equipment. There remain, though, the sceptics, and the layout and content of this book is intended to furnish a balanced presentation—warts and all. In this respect the opening chapter by Koch-Weser is highly commendable. Thereafter the topics tend to be paired with one chapter clinically balanced by another on the laboratory technique which is admir-