

Principles and Techniques of Surgical Pathology. Waldemar A Schmidt. (Pp 746; illustrated; \$55.00.) Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. 1983.

When I first scanned this book I did not think I was going to like it or find it very useful. I was wrong on both counts. This is a book for histopathologists written by a real pathologists' pathologist, approaching the practice of clinical pathology from the point of view of the person who actually does the job! Never before have I encountered in one book such a comprehensive and well expressed exposition of the principles, practice, techniques, and importance of surgical histopathology. Chapter headings include "The Cutting Room", "The Gross Description", "The Intra-operative Consultation", and several chapters with recommendations for dealing with and reporting on particular specimens from specific sites. Through all of these chapters the author does not allow himself to become sidetracked from the object of the whole exercise, namely the welfare of the patient. Even in the section of the chapter on "The Gross Description", subheaded "Semantics and Style — Art and Science", the clear message proclaimed is that "excellent communication enhances our reliability, our speciality and most important, the patient's care". The chapter on Frozen Sections is a masterly review and marrying of the philosophical and the practical and it includes much hard technical information. Though aimed primarily at a North American audience, this book applies equally well to histopathological practice in the UK and is likely to be of particular value to trainees.

DA LEVISON

Colour Atlas of Liver Pathology. RS Patrick. (Pp 175; 432 coloured illustrations; £42.) Oxford University Press. 1982.

This new volume is one of a number of atlases on liver pathology which have been published in the past few years and the prospective buyer (if his resources are limited) now has a problem of selection. This volume, one of a series on various topics and organs to be published under the overall editorship of Professor RC Curran, compares favourably with the others available, although at a price of £42 it is one of the more expensive. There are over 400 coloured prints which exhaustively cover the wide range of diseases which can affect the liver and which are an indication of and a fitting tribute to Professor Patrick's wide

experience in hepatopathology. The quality of the colour reproduction is high, but with the caveat that in some of the very low power pictures detail is lost. The majority are H & E but there is also a judicious selection of illustrations using the many special stains so frequently required for an adequate assessment of liver biopsies. The macroscopic illustrations are outstanding. The legends are precise and most helpful, but of course the lack of continuity of text is inevitable and, in my opinion, represents a deficiency in virtually all atlases and must be a daunting challenge to authors in this field. Now my prejudices are in evidence!

Your reviewer admits that he has never been more than mildly enthusiastic about colour atlases in histopathology. On receipt of this volume a quick census was carried out among the medical staff in this department. This elicited a 15% response favourable to colour atlases (in these days of frozen jobs absolute numbers may be prejudicial to one's department!). A number of trainees expressed the view that good contrast in black and white reproductions were often better in the "wall-paper-matching" exercise initially required in the difficult case. However, a demand for colour atlases clearly exists and the liver, in particular, has been adequately covered and is well served by this latest volume.

RNM MacSWEEN

Medical Microbiology. Ed Felix Milgrom and Thomas D Flanagan. (Pp 748; £18.) Churchill Livingstone. 1982.

In the introduction the editors of this multiple contributor book state that it takes courage to add yet another textbook of microbiology to the dozens already on the market, particularly those originating from the USA. They say that the book is intended for medical students and practitioners, and attempt to justify its publication on the basis of their own accumulated wisdom and experience of the microbiological material essential for students of medicine and other health care professionals. Most of us have had this feeling at some time. Many who have succumbed to the temptation to publish have lived to regret it.

The book is up to date and contains a remarkable amount of sometimes rather sketchy material in a relatively small volume. It can take refuge in the fact that the title is Medical Microbiology not Clinical Microbiology. It would be of little use to practitioners and the emphasis is wrong for

English medical students, though it might well be a satisfactory course book for the authors own students. There is little about epidemiology, principles of environmental health including hospital infection, or the use and testing of antibiotics. The book could not compete on the British market with, for instance, an established work which unfortunately now runs to two volumes, from the same publishers.

JH DARRELL

New Aspects of Diabetes. Clinics in Endocrinology and Metabolism. Vol 11, no 2. Guest eds DG Johnston and KGMM Alberti. (Pp 594; £11.73.) WB Saunders Company Ltd. 1982.

This volume on new aspects of diabetes in the series of Clinics in Endocrinology and Metabolism comes five years after its predecessor. In the interval, research and development in diabetes have progressed rapidly and it is opportune to take some time to read about what has been achieved so far. Among the articles there is an outstandingly clear account of the genetic susceptibility to insulin-dependent diabetes by the late Andrew Cudworth and by Ed Wolf. It draws on the important prospective Barts-Windsor Study and illustrates a line of research that may lead to the prevention of the development of diabetes in subjects identified as being at high risk. The excellent chapter on islet-cell antibodies also relates to this aspect and provides much thought-provoking material on the aetiology of diabetes. Other suitably critical reviews describe and evaluate the new developments that will place better means of delivery of insulin and assessment of the control of diabetes in the hands of the patient himself. The articles on the metabolic disturbances in diabetes expand a bit on existing knowledge and show how many questions are still to be answered, including the question of insulin-resistance in non-insulin dependent diabetes.

And who would have thought that WHO would reduce dramatically the prevalence of diabetes in the world merely by raising the level of blood-glucose required for the diagnosis of diabetes? All this and more is included in the compost of topics included in this volume. It is good value, easy to read, and most of the articles are sufficiently stimulating to send the reader to the library to read the primary source: this is surely the real test of the value of a review volume.

R MAHLER