Evaluation and Management of Hospital Infections. New Perspectives in Clinical Microbiology no 5. Ed Ralph van Furth. (Pp 266; $39.00.) Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. 1982.

The uninitiated might be excused for thinking this a text on hospital infection. In fact, it is a motley collection of papers delivered at a symposium in the Netherlands, gathered together, lightly edited, and printed in an inexpensive typewriter format. The book is number 5 of the series *New Perspectives in Clinical Microbiology*. Over half the 22 contributions deal with antibiotics, either as prophylaxis or with bacterial drug resistance. Little attention has been afforded to disinfection and asepsis, but this reflects general disinterest in the field. Amidst some pedestrian and often unintelligible contributions are some excellent reviews; in particular, one on control of surgical sepsis entitled "Don't touch the blade" by OM Lidwell dealt more fully with the subject. There is little new in this book; neither data presented nor ideas discussed. As there is no index and the titles of the contributions are often vague, it is impossible to find where a particular topic is covered. The free discussion sessions held after some of the papers do little to clarify the message. Is there a need to publish such discourses as a book? It would have admirably suited a supplement to the numerous microbiology journals.

RCB SLACK

Ultrastructure of the Small Intestinal Mucosa. Normal and Disease-related Appearances. Margot Shiner. (Pp 163; 165 figs; DM 168.) Springer. 1983.

As the British pioneer of the technique of intestinal biopsy, Dr Shiner has an unrivalled clinical experience. This book summarises the ultrastructural observations from over 250 intestinal biopsies, from patients with various clinical and pathological diagnoses. There are chapters on the normal mucosa, on coeliac disease, cow's milk protein intolerance, and on protein-energy malnutrition, with a final section touching on miscellaneous conditions. There are useful reference lists for each section.

Dr Shiner's preface observes that this book represents a "personal and subjective study" of the field, and admits that there are limitations in its coverage of disease. I find the section on normal ultrastructure a bit superficial, while in technical terms it seems a pity that there is no mention of scanning electron microscopy, increasingly used in studies of the intestinal mucosa. This book, therefore, is not a comprehensive review but a selective treatise reflecting the author's personal experience and interests.

With a few exceptions, the quality of the illustrations is excellent, although the interpretation of some of the micrographs can be disputed. In particular, confusing oblique-sectioning effects seem to have been overlooked. For example, the apparent disorganisation of the terminal web in figure 2.5, the apparent cytoplasmic hypertrophy and thickened basement membrane in figure 2.25, and the appearances described as "lysis" in figures 4.8, 5.15, and 5.18 can all, in the reviewer's opinion, be better explained as intact and unremarkable structures which lie at an angle to the plane of section and appear distorted or blurred as a result. The text on page 54 states that fenestrations are absent from lymphatic endothelium, but the structures identified as lymph vessels in figures 1.37, 1.39 and 1.56 all show fenestrated endothelium.

I think, however, that it would be unfair to place too much weight on such points, which are the criticisms of an ultrastructural purist. Within clear self-imposed limits, Dr Shiner has produced a very creditable record of her remarkable personal achievement in bridging the gap between the clinical and the ultrastructural worlds.

PG TONER

Environmental Pathology. An Evolving Field. Ed Rolla B Hill and James A Terzian. (Pp 376; £46.) Alan R Liss Inc. 1982.

This book, based on two symposia held in Aspen, Colorado at the Given Institute in 1979 and 1980 deals with the role of the pathologist in assessing the effects of changes in the environment. The most successful chapters include those of Hill defining terms and pointing out the difference between pathological environments (Love Canal) and hostile environments (Antarctica) with good discussion of risk-benefit analysis, thresholds, and the principles of causation. Vesell gives an excellent account of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics, and Warnock and Chung good accounts of environmental lung disease. Here it is evident that most of the work has been published elsewhere, a problem with much of the text. The collection of these topics might be helpful to the generalist, but some are treated superficially and others seem of doubtful relevance, for example, gene mapping.

Some contributions are uncritical — the presence of teratogens in semen does not indicate a likely male effect, there are widespread reservations about the Oregon 2,4,5-T study, which are not mentioned, and toxicity testing is too briefly discussed to give an idea of the scientific problems of the subject. The uneven nature of the text, a problem with conference proceedings, make this a book of limited appeal at £46.

CL BERRY

Theory and Practice of Histological Techniques. Ed JD Bancroft and A Stevens. 2nd ed. (Pp 662; £32.) Churchill Livingstone. 1982.

On this side of the Atlantic methodology books agree that good laboratory practice needs a sound theoretical basis. This leads to a contents page similar to its competitors, like the sameness of restaurant menus. The garnish and presentation are attractive, with additional eye-catching colour photomicrographs on better paper, usually on the same page as the relevant text. A half-mourning grey border surrounds the technical details, making it easier to read the text in continuity. Many of the chapters are wholly or partly written by pathologists, disproving the growing idea that laboratory techniques are the sole province of the technical scientist.

New material includes quantitation, immunohistology, safety, and more ultrastructure, but immunofluorescent and immunoenzyme methods are separated, there is no colour photomicrograph of an immunoperoxidase preparation, and the chapter on safety is incomplete. Overall, this improved comprehensive second edition is now well established and is well suited to all those who work in histopathology laboratories, including those medically qualified.

RAB DRURY

Platelets. Pathophysiology and Antiplatelet Drug Therapy. Harvey J Weiss. (Pp 165; £17.) Alan R Liss Inc. 1982.

Any haematologist or clinician with more than a passing interest in platelets finds the acquisition of new facts a daunting process in face of the many papers that are published every year on this subject. Further it becomes progressively more difficult to unravel the mass of phenomena described so an up-to-date review by an authority is always welcome.

In this book the author has provided a

valuable review of the present knowledge of platelet physiology and pathophysiology. Further he has described the effect of many drugs on platelet function and the use of these drugs in certain large clinical trials in cerebrovascular and ischaemic heart disease and in other specific clinical situations—for example, thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura. Dr. Weiss has done a fantastic task in reviewing some 827 papers in 107 pages of text. This monograph is valuable and of wide interest and in spite of this condensed mass of fact it is interesting to read and still contains a significant amount of the author's own wisdom and valuable criticism.

This monograph must be a valuable addition to the shelves of any Haematology Department or of any clinician who has an interest in the field of haemostasis or thrombosis. It is good value at the quoted price.

AA SHARP

Some new titles

The receipt of these books is acknowledged and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the lender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits.

Development of Cancer Centres and Community Cancer Control Programmes. Report on a WHO Working Group. EURO Reports and Studies 70. (Pp 38; paperback; Sw fr 4.) World Health Organisation. 1982.

Medical Microbiology Laboratory Procedures. Lucy Treagan and Lynn Pulliam. (Pp 318; illustrated; £12.) WB Saunders Company. 1982.

Progress in Clinical Cancer. Vol VIII. Ed Irving M Ariel. (Pp 350; $74.50.) Grune & Stratton Inc. 1982.

Mutagens in our Environment. Progress in Clinical and Biological Research. Vol. 109. Ed Marja Sorsa and Harri Vainio. (Pp 504; £38.) Alan R Liss Inc. 1982.

Correction

In the paper by Smith *et al*[1] in the February 1983 issue, page 235, Material and methods, lines 22–24 should read:

(i) 72% ethanol, 5 ml; *(ii)* 0·15 *M* acetate pH 3·8, 3 ml; *(iii)* 0·3 *M* acetate pH 3·8, 1 ml; *(iv)* 0·3 *M* acetate pH 3·8, 2 ml; *(v)* 0·9 *M* acetate pH 5·0, 3 ml; *(vi)* 0·9 *M* acetate pH 9·6, 3 ml.

The authors apologise for this error which was due to a mistake in the calculation of the molarity of a stock solution of acetic acid.

Reference

[1] Smith SM, Myszor M, Setchell KDR, Murphy GM. Measurement of conjugated and unconjugated serum bile acid concentrations using 3α-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase. *J Clin Pathol* 1983;**36**:235–6.