Book reviews

their eminence in their own specialty but for their ability to communicate complex subjects into a form which is eminently readable. The book is superbly illustrated and this contributes considerably to its value.

This book can be highly recommended to all those wishing to acquire a wider breadth of knowledge in the area of immunological disease. With so many authors and chapters all outstanding, it would be invidious to single out any particular chapters for review. Suffice it to say that one is led effortlessly through immunogenetics, gene products on various cell types which now serve as an aid in the analysis of lymphoid malignancies. The various sub-sets of lymphocytes are described plus interaction with macrophages. Various authors discuss the mediators of hypersensitivity, and other soluble factors such as complement and C reactive protein.

This goes beyond being one more textbook on mechanisms in immunology; it deals with the application of this new knowledge to diagnosis and in particular monoclonal antibodies are discussed and their application to both diagnosis and treatment of disease.

It is a rare pleasure to review a book of such quality and wide appeal.

DA WILLOUGHBY


This book is a compilation of papers presented at the first international conference on human tumour markers held in Munich last year. The first two sentences are perhaps the most important. These state that “current tumour markers are neither highly sensitive nor tumour-specific. No ideal tumour marker has been found". Following these opening remarks one can be forgiven for approaching the rest of the book with a certain scepticism and in some ways one is not disappointed. With the exception of well-known hormonal substances, there is no circulating tumour marker which is of outstanding use in diagnosis or follow-up of tumours, and correspondingly no immunohistochemical marker either. Nevertheless, there is much of value in these papers which together summarise everything that is currently known about the subject. From this base line more useful markers must inevitably emerge and pathologists engaged in research on this topical subject will find much that is useful in this book, particularly with regard to techniques and avenues for future investigation.

PG ISAACSON


With ageing populations, most western countries are bound to experience an increase in the incidence of prostatic carcinoma. In the USA it is already the second most common malignant tumour in males, and the relatively advanced age of those afflicted creates therapeutic problems about which there is understandable controversy. The publication in the Clinics in Oncology series is therefore both timely and relevant. It is not inappropriate that most of the constituent papers are devoted to the various aspects of treatment, including surgery and radiotherapy, and there are detailed accounts of developing trends in hormone therapy and chemotherapy which are likely to become increasingly employed in the future. While only one chapter is devoted exclusively to pathology, this contains useful updated diagnostic information and the illustrations are of a good standard. Pathologists will also welcome the interesting chapter on epidemiology and aetiology, as well as the review of clinical diagnostic techniques in current use. This publication is highly recommended to both clinicians and laboratory workers who seek to improve their capacity to deal with the many and varied problems presented by this important disease.

FD LEE


The stated purpose of this volume is to offer guidance to the clinician. This it does in a reasonable and well organised fashion and it would be churlish to complain there is little new or surprising for the microbiologist. The importance of thorough clinical observations to the worthwhile practice of clinical microbiology is stressed throughout. The clinical reader will, one hopes, take away the important knowledge that a good clinical diagnosis as to the likely site of infection combined with expert examination of a small number of well collected specimens of relevant material will not only provide a specific diagnosis but define the antibiotic therapy indicated. The importance of purely local knowledge of antibiotic susceptibility patterns is emphasised. The recommendations on antibiotic treatment for severe infections pending laboratory investigations are straightforward and suggest well-tried and relatively inexpensive agents. It is stressed that totally "blind" treatment is very rarely indicated and there is a welcome reluctance to over-indulge with the latest “Cephamagics” and “Wondecilins.” For a quick reference to a summary table or tables indicating antibiotics, dosages, and uses might have been helpful.

The price of this book of less than two hundred pages at £19 might deter the widest readership.

RC GEORGE


The concept of “pre-cancer” is still a fuzzy one, and the reporting of premalignant lesions is a field where the diagnostic pathologist must tread warily, choosing his words with care. For the clinician, the dilemma in dealing with precancerous lesions is that a conservative approach may be ineffective, yet effective treatment may be needlessly dramatic. Both pathologist and oncologist will find much instruction in this multi-author survey of premalignant states. After chapters on epidemiology (Alderson), and genetics (Harnden), there are eleven chapters on precancerous states at various sites. Such names as Weinbren (liver), Mostofi (prostate), and Spriggs (cervix) guarantee an authoritative presentation. A final chapter on clinical implications (Calman) ends with the hope that “with clearer recognition of precancerous states, cancer therapy can... become less destructive and more efficacious”. This informative book should help to achieve this aim. Perhaps a second edition could