MCQ Tutor: Medical Immunology. Ruth C Matthews and James P Burnie. (Pp 193; paperback £7.95.) Heinemann. 1984.

Any authors who can spot a gap in the thickets of books on immunology deserve success, particularly if they can claim that the gap was created by the Royal College of Physicians. Success should be theirs because they have produced a solid, balanced compendium of multiple choice questions falling neatly into two categories; the first, as they say, will help candidates for Part 1 of the MRCP examination, whilst the second meets the needs of most students and practitioners facing the diffusion of immunology into most medical specialities.

The first part of the book is particularly impressive—how many “practising immunologists” can work the examples set for calculating the number of determinants on a given antigen? As is the way with applied immunology, the authors’ touch is less certain when faced with the vastness of the subject. Certainly, there are a few controversial points. Is it reasonable further to enshrine the OKT nomenclature for lymphocyte antigens when scientific ingenuity can surely devise a more logical notation than one provided by a set of commercial reagents? It is also anti-intellectual to expect students at any level to remember a phrase like “2-5A synthetase” without appreciating the full biochemical term which is thus abbreviated (page 41). Few people would agree that myasthenia gravis is a “type II reaction” (page 57); the true association between the auto-antibody to the acetylcholine receptor and the disease is much more complicated.

Unavoidable factual altercations apart, it is a sound, reasonably priced, and innovative contribution to the immunological literature.

AM DENMAN

Ultrastructural Atlas of the Inner Ear. Ed I Friedmann and J Ballantyne. (Pp 329; £59.) Butterworths. 1984.

This is a sumptuous book with numerous clear illustrations of the ultrastructure of the cochlea, vestibule, and endolymphatic sac and duct, produced by leading experts in the field.

The introductory chapters on anatomy and techniques are noteworthy in their

clarity. Scanning and freeze fracture as well as transmission studies are covered in the technique section and well represented subsequently in the book. The chapter on organ culture of the mammalian embryo otocyst is disappointing and repetitive, containing many full page unlabelled photographs which often illustrate the same structures over and over again. Two of the photographs in the chapter on the spiral ganglion lack some of the pointers mentioned in the legends (Figures 7.1 and 7.6). Apart from these faults the standard of presentation is high.

It is difficult to assess the usefulness of this work to research workers in this field. It is likely that some at least will benefit from access to it as a guide, certainly in the early stages of their work. As a compilation of, for the most part, high quality recent pictures of ultrastructure in this difficult area, it is unique.

L MICHAELS

Pathology of the Larynx. L Michaels. (Pp 353; 219 figs; £52.50.) Springer. 1984.

There has always been a gap on the pathologist’s bookshelf where a reference work on laryngeal pathology should be. That gap has at last been more than adequately filled. This monograph, based on Professor Michaels’ experience at the Institute of Laryngology & Otology, is encyclopaedic in scope, well referenced, and very well illustrated. Starting with the anatomy, histology, and development of the larynx, it moves on to congenital and non-neoplastic lesions and neoplasms. There is a good deal of out of the way material to be found in these pages, and your reviewer tested the book on a couple of peculiar laryngeal biopsies in which it came out trumps. But the main problem in laryngeal pathology is the interpretation of premalignant lesions of the cords, and this is fully covered. The chapters on squamous neoplasms form the heart of the book, and the author’s transverse slicing method on excised larynges provides vivid illustrations of the origin and spread of laryngeal carcinoma. Perhaps some of the sections (for example, on the problems of pseudo sarcomatous carcinomas and verrucous carcinoma) might be expanded in a second edition.

Every pathologist who reports material from an ENT department should have this book on his shelves. Highly recommended.

OG DODGE

The Biology of Epithelial Cell Populations. Vols 1 and 2. N Wright and M Alison. Vol 1. (Pp 536; £39.50.) Vol 2. (Pp 711; £44.50.) Oxford University Press. 1984.

Histopathology is often criticised for presenting static descriptions of disease. Professor Wright and his co-workers in Newcastle, Oxford, and the Hammersmith have rebutted this over the years with their many studies in cell kinetics. Now in these books Professor Wright and Dr Alison have brought together explicit accounts of methods and techniques in this field both focused on epithelial cells in the various systems rather than on haemopoietic or tumour cells. These books are valuable because they emphasise proper techniques but they are particularly stimulating because they put epithelial organisation into perspective.

The two volumes are a potential classic and are a great credit to the Postgraduate Medical School. Some clinical laboratories may regard them as a low priority in the book budget but any laboratory which regards itself as a training ground would be remiss not to expose their juniors to this stimulus.

G SLAVIN

Fine Needle Aspiration Cytodiagnosis. Color Atlas. Carlo Ravetto and Paolo Boncato. (Pp 209; £60.) Butterworths. 1984.

This is an atlas consisting of 278 figures most of which are in colour. The text is limited to the captions to the figures. There is no index. Most of the colour plates measure 8.0 cm by 5.3 cm and many are half of this size. The magnification or the number of cells illustrated is correspondingly limited.

The first two chapters are on equipment, technique, and general cytological features. The remaining 18 chapters illustrate fine needle aspiration cytology from as many sites. Those from which aspirates are commonly taken are represented by more numerous figures, but the sections on the thyroid and some less common sources of material such as the testis and soft tissue tumours are of particular interest.

The pictures are of reasonable quality but their small size restricts the information conveyed. This book will be referred to when confronted with certain diagnostic problems but there are better volumes on the subject within the price.

ELIZABETH A HUDSON