

Although there is some unevenness in the chapters, most are excellent, and I strongly recommend that all diagnostic laboratories should have access to a copy.

ELIZABETH SHAW

Aspiration Biopsy. Cytologic Interpretation and Histologic Bases. LG Koss, S Woyke, and W Olszewski. (Pp 502; £72.25.) Williams and Wilkins, 1985.

The introduction to this book covers fundamental principles and techniques, including a helpful account of relevant imaging methods. The book then divides into two major sections, one dealing with palpable lesions and the other with lesions accessible only with the aid of imaging techniques. Although the authors modestly say the "book has many gaps," it is, in fact, remarkably comprehensive. For each site the text gives an account of pathological and clinical problems followed by a detailed description of the cytological findings. Written mainly by the senior American author, the text is eminently readable and supported by an excellent bibliography. The illustrations, largely provided by the European authors, consist predominantly of black and white photomicrographs of the cytopathology with relevant histopathology, and they are of a consistently high standard. While appreciating their reasons, one regrets the authors' decision to exclude air dried Romanowsky stained material. Despite this minor reservation the book should be warmly welcomed as an essential addition to the library in any department working in this rapidly developing field.

HELENA E HUGHES

Human Prenatal Diagnosis. Clinical and Biochemical Analysis. Vol 18. Ed Karen Filkins, Joseph F Russo. (Pp 424; \$90.00.) Marcel Dekker Inc, 1985.

This volume on human prenatal diagnosis introduces, investigates, and clarifies diagnosis, genetic counselling, and intervention; new and experimental techniques are presented and a wide range of topics are covered. In some places the book contains useful recommendations for current practice—for example, listing five sets of indications for amniocentesis for cytogenetic disorders. These recommendations are qualified as "sufficiently established for routine clinical applications," other indications, although considered are "not sufficiently es-

established." In other chapters, such as ultrasonography: first and second trimesters, no such useful summary is given. This is understandable as the knowledge in that area is not as well established as that of cytogenetic abnormalities. The book is thus uneven, sometimes addressing the non-specialist, and sometimes the research worker and those at work in referral centres. There are even hints of this uneven quality in the wise and comprehensive introduction by Kushnik. One recurrent theme is the current extensive work being carried out to "prevent" a small percentage of disabling genetic diseases.

Despite being at the beginning of prenatal diagnosis we are already confronted with the problems of the cost effectiveness of "preventing" rare diseases. This north American book does not help a hard pressed team plan their allocation of resources. In part this arises from the difficulties of distinguishing between research and standard clinical practice. Most of this book seems concerned with the evolution of a possible future.

This is a useful book for referral centres for genetic and congenital disease, however, because it contains a very wide range of review articles.

RA HARKNESS

1985 Year Book of Pathology and Clinical Pathology. Ed KM Brinkhous. (Pp 456; £43.) Blackwells, 1985.

Yet another volume of this perennial has appeared, and it is just as interesting as ever and more attractive. The format has been changed to mark the 85th anniversary of the original Practical Medicine Year Books, and this volume is the 38th annual of the current series. To provide over 250 abstracts, with pithy relevant observations by the editors accompanying most abstracts, about 87 journals have been screened, including not only pathology and clinical pathology journals but also clinical and pure scientific journals.

The first part on pathology, occupies nearly three quarters of the text and contains 16 chapters. The first chapter, on general pathology, is subdivided into nine sections, one of which is a new section on perinatal and paediatric pathology with 10 abstracts. The other 15 chapters are devoted to systemic pathology. The second part of the book, comprising seven chapters, relates to clinical pathology. These include chemical pathology, toxicology and drug monitoring, microbiology, parasitology, blood banking, haematology, quality control (devoted mainly towards clinical chemistry and

haematology), and clinical applications (with references to SNOP and SNOMED).

In all parts of the book the increasing application of polyclonal and monoclonal antibody techniques is evident. Quite apart from the book's usefulness with respect to specific problems, it is a useful text to browse through during a tea break. It is so difficult these days to keep abreast of the advances within one's own discipline, that one tends to avoid learning about advances in other disciplines; but the effort should be made nevertheless. This book provides an opportunity to do just that.

In addition to a subject index the book has an author index. At first glance it seems to be quite a lot to pay for this book, but at roughly 10p per page or 17p per abstract it is good value for money.

Immunoassay. An Introduction. R Edwards. (Pp 162; soft cover £11.95.) William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd, 1985.

This book provides a very useful account of the various immunoassay methods in current use in laboratories. There is a brief historical introduction, and the basic concepts of the various assay methods are explained. The book is well laid out and the figures are a model of clarity. It assumes little medical knowledge and is an ideal book for those wishing to learn the basics of immunoassay. There are individual chapters on methods such as radioimmunoassay, enzyme labelled immunoassay, and particle agglutination. The book ends with a good overview of the laboratory application of the various assay methods.

The book seems to be aimed at students of biochemistry, technicians, and perhaps medical students taking intercalated degrees. It is not well suited to the needs of post graduate students due to insufficient technical detail and few references. All in all, however, it would be a good starting point for the undergraduate who wishes to learn about immunoassay methods. I shall certainly recommend it to any student who wishes to have an introduction to immunoassay methods.

CHW HOBBS

Science Writing for Beginners. AD Farr. (Pp 117; paperback £5.80.) Blackwells, 1985.

Anyone who reads this book will find it both interesting, easy to read, and amusing.

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