

clinically normal subsequently develop the disease. In a study by Betterle *et al*⁵ four of nine adrenal autoantibody positive, non-Addisonian patients developed the disease within one to 31 months, and a fifth had reduced adrenocortical reserve.

Our results, therefore, suggest that the incidence of parathyroid autoantibodies in autoimmune adrenal disease is less than that originally observed.¹

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Effect of BPL on haemoglobin electrophoresis

It is the practice of this department to add the compound B-propionolactone (BPL) to whole blood or plasma from patients who

are HTLV-III positive. Previous workers,^{1,2} have described the effect of BPL on several biochemical and haematological measurements.

During the laboratory investigation of a patient positive for HTLV-III with a sickle haemoglobin, a sample treated with BPL (Sigma Chemicals; final concentration 0.25%) gave a changed haemoglobin electrophoretic pattern, using cellulose acetate in Tris-edetic acid-borate (TEB) at pH 8.9 (Figure). This was also observed with treated normal samples and samples treated with another structural variant (Hb-C). Detection of abnormal haemoglobins was thus rendered impossible.

Further investigation showed that the Itano solubility test³ for sickle haemoglobin and the sickle test (using sodium metabisulphite)⁴ gave inconsistent results that were difficult to interpret. This could lead to false negative findings in patients with the sickle gene. Samples from such patients requiring investigation of a possible haemoglobinopathy should not be treated with BPL.

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Book reviews

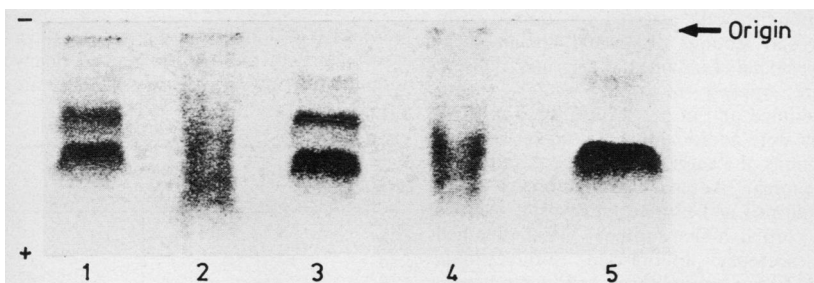
Methods in Complement for Clinical Immunologists. Ed Keith Whaley. (Pp 330; £40.) Churchill Livingstone. 1985.

This is a laboratory workbook edited by a leading expert. Professor Whaley has written a substantial proportion himself; other contributions are predominantly from Glasgow. Following an introduction to the complement system, the book outlines in detail laboratory procedures for complement. These cover purification of the different components, their measurement, and immunochemical and related assays with complement components. There are some chapters describing the role of complement in specific disorders such as renal disease. The book most closely resembles a laboratory work book, and this is how it should be used. Methods are broken down into a series of simple stages. A novice in complement immunochemistry should have no difficulty in undertaking many laboratory techniques using complement by simply following the descriptions. Some may find that the book describes a few methods with which they are only too familiar in unnecessary detail. Nevertheless, I would recommend it as an essential practical handbook for laboratory workers in this field.

DL SCOTT

Brain's Diseases of the Nervous System. 9th ed. Sir John Walton. (Pp 701; £45.) Oxford University Press. 1985.

One of the more attractive aspects of specialisation is the close association between clinicians, radiologists, and pathologists. Perhaps none more so than in the neurosciences where the anatomical, functional, and biochemical complexities of the nervous system, including muscle, require that the neuropathologist has a considerable awareness and appreciation of related disciplines. Any text that helps in the acquisition and integration of large amounts of multidisciplinary knowledge is therefore to be greatly welcomed. The ninth edition of *Brain's Diseases of the Nervous System* fulfils this basic need, because it provides a comprehensive account of pathophysiological principles as they relate to the clinical features and investigation of disease and dysfunction of the nervous system. With its extensive modifications and many new refer-



The effect of BPL on haemoglobin electrophoresis (1) sickle cell trait control; (2) sickle cell trait sample treated with BPL; (3) sickle cell trait sample untreated; (4) normal sample treated with BPL; (5) normal sample untreated.

Book reviews

ences, this well written new edition in its attractive two column format makes easy and stimulating reading. Without any hesitation I can therefore recommend this book to all those interested, pathologists included, in the pursuit of a better understanding of diseases of the nervous system.

DI GRAHAM

Sickle Cell Disease. GR Serjeant. (Pp 478; £35.) Oxford University Press. 1986.

This is a special book that not only should be read by anyone concerned with sickle cell disease but will be read with pleasure by all those who appreciate a well produced medical monograph. The unique experience of the author and his team in Jamaica is here for all to share. He guides us through the literature, including the molecular pathology and the clinical and laboratory problems of management. He leaves us in no doubt of his personal opinions but at the same time refers us to other workers' reviews in copious references. Each chapter presents a review of a particular aspect from pathophysiology, diagnosis, and epidemiology to those on bones and joints, the gut, the lungs, and the renal system. The entire volume is lavishly illustrated with clinical photographs, laboratory material, x-rays, isotope scans, angiograms, and, indeed, anything that is needed to emphasise the author's point. The chapters on clinical management of the painful crisis, surgery, and the problems of pregnancy, give practical guidance based both on personal practice and published data. The comments on screening and sickle cell clinics are particularly timely with the current developments in genetic counselling. This is a reference work that is likely to be in common use rather than left to gather dust on the shelf.

A JACOBS

Special Topics in Endocrinology and Metabolism. Vol 7. Ed Margo P Cohen, Piero P Foa. (Pp 280; £43.) Alan R Liss Inc. 1985. ISBN 0-8451-0706-2.

This series must be compared with that of *Clinics in Endocrinology and Metabolism* (Saunders, three monthly; about 250 pp and £8 per issue); *Endocrine Reviews* (Williams and Wilkins, three monthly; about 100 pp and £11 per paper bound issue); *Monographs in Endocrinology* (Springer Verlag, four monthly; about 150 pp and £30 per

issue). There are also less frequent publications such as *Recent Advances in Endocrinology and Metabolism*.

There is nothing original in the aim of this book. Here is a collection of isolated essays by authorities, generally comprehensive, written, presented, and referenced to high standards. The topics are ectopic hormones; zinc deficiency; peptide hormone administration; prostatic cancer therapy; prenatal diagnosis; abnormal puberty; hypothalamic hypogonadism. Some of the authors have written similar reviews elsewhere, to which readers may already have access.

Any prospective buyer, whether an individual or a library, must compare the cost of this book, for the material offered, against that of similar series.

DN BARON

Mononuclear Phagocytes. Characteristics, Physiology and Function. Ed Ralph van Furth. (Pp 829; £145.50.) Martinus Nijhoff. 1985. ISBN 0 89838 732 9.

This book comprises the proceedings of the fourth Leiden conference on the mononuclear phagocyte system. There is no more versatile mammalian cell than the mononuclear phagocyte. Current thinking, as reflected in this volume, suggests that this single cell type derived from a bone marrow stem cell, is almost infinitely adaptable and plays an important part in almost every defence mechanism mounted by mammalian organism. The versatility of the mononuclear phagocyte is well illustrated by its constantly changing phenotype, and this makes recognition of these cells extremely difficult.

The first two chapters of this volume suggest that, in mice at least, monoclonal antibodies that reliably recognise mononuclear phagocytes are at last emerging. This promising beginning is followed by further discussion of the surface properties of mononuclear phagocytes. Thereafter, related contributions are usefully grouped into subheaded sections dealing with a wide range of properties of these fascinating cells. Each contribution ends with a succinct summary followed by extremely useful, and not over abundant, references. At the end of each chapter there is a well edited short discussion by the conference participants. It is a tribute to the participants that these discussions are uniformly stimulating. Anybody with more than a passing interest in mononuclear phagocyte cells will want to

have these proceedings available for consultation.

The book is extremely well produced and easy to refer to: I detected no typographical errors, which must be rare for a book of this kind. Given the importance of the mononuclear phagocyte, this is a book that should be available in every pathology department where there is an interest in these cells. Unfortunately, the price of this volume is prohibitive, even for university libraries. Perhaps the publishers underestimated the appeal that a book of this kind would have for I am certain that at a more competitive price it would command reasonable sales.

PG ISAACSON

Praxis der Prostatazytologie. Technik und Diagnostik. W Leistschneider, R Nagel. (Pp 227; DM 190.) Springer-Verlag. 1984.

When it was first introduced, exfoliative cytology was regarded with some suspicion or indifference by the classical histopathologist. Since then, the technical difficulties discussed in detail in this atlas have largely been overcome, and the examination of smears or aspiration biopsies has contributed greatly to the earlier diagnosis of cancer of various organs. This excellent produced atlas deals with the cytology of the prostate. Delicate surgical techniques are required for the collection of adequate specimens, and these are described in the first part of the book by the authors, both professors of urology at the Free University in Berlin. This is followed by techniques of processing and staining and a surprisingly detailed description of the microscope and its uses. There is a brief section on the classification of carcinoma of the prostate. The bulk of the atlas deals with the normal and neoplastic cytology of the prostate and is profusely illustrated, although comparative histological illustrations would have enhanced the interest of the histopathologist and assisted the trainee cytologist.

The final chapters deal with the application of modern morphometric methods. Although the objective quantitative assessment of both cytological and histological specimens is important, the diagnosis is more often than not based on the qualitative first impression of the experienced microscopist. Experience can only be acquired by the study of large numbers of specimens, but this book will serve as a reliable guide both for the beginner and the mature cytopathologist.

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