Book reviews


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 and stimulate 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


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 hyponadism. 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


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 that 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 ISAACS


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 excellently 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 profitably 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.

I FRIEDMAN