

Book reviews

Clinical Biochemistry of Alcoholism. Contemporary Issues in Clinical Biochemistry. Ed Sidney B Rosalki. (Pp 305; £32.) Churchill Livingstone. 1984. ISBN 0-443-02582-7.

There has been a proliferation of multi-author books on various aspects of alcohol abuse, and therefore an important question is whether this volume fills a need or merely duplicates existing texts. The editor states that, "each chapter is comprehensive... gives a very full account of the clinical and biochemical features of alcoholism and its major complications." Much of the book falls short of these claims. Several chapters provide a brief overview of the pathways of ethanol metabolism in man but their conclusions are somewhat at variance: lipid abnormalities are described inconsistently; thus steatosis is not commonly accompanied by hyperlipidaemia. Clearly, the book lacks a decisive editorial policy. The chapter on porphyrin metabolism is disappointing. The synthetic pathway has been considerably simplified with the identification of hydroxy methyl bilane synthase, and considerable updating is required of this chapter. The book is not comprehensive and sections on myopathy are noteworthy by their absence. Little information, if any, is available on the central and peripheral nervous systems, renal or skeletal lesions in alcohol abuse. Some chapters are clearly of interest but overall the book is disappointing and cannot be recommended in its present form.

TJ PETERS

The Present State of Peptospirosis Diagnosis and Control. Current Topics in Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science. WA Ellis, TW Little. (Pp 247; £34.75.) Martinus Nijhoff. 1986. ISBN 0-89838-777-9.

A seminar sponsored by the directorate general for agriculture on the Commission of the European Communities was held in Belfast in 1984, and the papers presented have been collected and published as this monograph in the series *Current Topics in Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science*. The papers are written mainly from a veterinary angle, although Dr Sheena Waitkins contributed one on the zoonotic aspects of leptospirosis as seen in the United Kingdom, and there are several dealing with the epidemiology of the disease in animals in the

various member states of the Community. The use of a vaccine against *L hardjo* infections in cattle in the United Kingdom is the subject of another paper but, for the practising microbiologist, the most valuable articles are probably those describing the application of newer techniques for the identification and classification of leptospires.

A useful representation of the "state of the art" of the microbiology of the disease in Europe but hardly a "must" for the clinical microbiologist's bookshelf.

JEM WHITEHEAD

Advances in Clinical Chemistry. Vol 24. Ed HE Spiegel. (Pp 308; £36.50.) Academic Press Inc. 1985.

The perception by our clinical colleagues of clinical chemistry as a clinical science has always been partly obscured by our obsession with techniques, instrumentation, and aspects of quality control. There has been an apparent unwillingness to be concerned about the mechanisms of disease.

There has been a change in the editorial philosophy of this volume, which has been edited by a board of international scientists who are responsible for identifying new information relative to the science of health and disease, as well as improvements in current practices of the profession. In this volume there is an in depth consideration of vitamin B12, excellent review articles on immune complexes and lipoproteins, and the leading edge of technology is not ignored; a chapter is devoted to isotope-dilution mass spectrometry.

Advances in Clinical Chemistry has always been value for money and the change in its spectrum of topics should attract readers from many other disciplines besides clinical chemistry. This is a worthwhile addition to the departmental library.

BRENDA SLAVIN

Diseases of the Breast. 3rd ed. CD Haagen-sen. (Pp 1050; £95.) WB Saunders. 1986. ISBN 0-7216-4442-2.

It is sixteen years since the last edition of this book was published, and in that time it has been expanded by over 200 pages and has

tripled in price. The format remains much the same with numerous individual case descriptions throughout. The book is very interesting in that it is based on personal observation of large numbers of cases. Some of the conclusions drawn, however, are not currently generally accepted—for instance, the author states in his classification that gross cysts predispose to subsequent carcinoma but does not discuss the implications of florid hyperplasia or atypical hyperplasia. About a hundred pages are devoted to the surgical management of breast carcinoma but only two of these address the issue of less than total mastectomy and for a book published in 1986 this would seem inadequate.

This book is valuable as a detailed catalogue of breast disease and is well illustrated with predominantly black and white photographs, but it is difficult to recommend it because of its high price; even those particularly interested in the field would probably rather borrow the library copy.

NICOLA J BARNARD

Surgical Pathology of the Lymph Nodes and Related Organs. Major Problems in Pathology. Vol 16. Elaine Sarkin Jaffe. (Pp 459; £75.) WB Saunders. 1985.

This comprehensive and well illustrated account of lymphoreticular disease provides a great deal of information in the form that most diagnostic pathologists will appreciate. There are detailed and generally excellent sections on reactive states, Hodgkin's disease, the low grade lymphomas, and most extranodal lymphomas. Differential diagnosis is well explored, and there are a lot of helpful clinical data. The presentation and emphasis, however, are somewhat variable, even for a multi-author format. The high grade lymphomas and the important gastrointestinal lymphomas, for example, receive only desultory treatment, whereas much space is devoted to pulmonary lymphoma. More guidance regarding the role of immunohistochemistry in diagnosis would have been preferable. It should also be noted that the terminology very much reflects the provenance of the book; there is, for example, no mention of centrocytic lymphoma. None the less there can be no doubt that this book will increase the confidence of both pathologists and oncologists in approaching the diagnosis of lymphoreticular disease.

FD LEE