

Standardization and Quantitation of Diagnostic Staining in Cytology. Mathilde E Boon, LP Kok. (Pp 159; D fl. 99.00.) Coulomb Press Leyden. 1986. ISBN 90-71421-04-X.

This is ostensibly a glorified course book produced on the occasion of a short course on the standardisation and quantitation of staining in cytology. One can agree with the foreword in congratulating the authors on their initiative, which was to present in some detail the various processes that the cell undergoes in its travel towards a final stained end point. The contributions come from different authors, some dealing with the subject in much more theoretical detail than others, resulting in an inhomogeneous whole, but it does attempt to focus on certain problem areas which confront the cytologist or bring them to notice should he or she be unaware of them.

An especially unique contribution of value is the theoretical study of microwave enhancement of staining, a subject of increasing interest.

Some error has occurred in the layout and binding, as pages 56 and 57 are blank and the colour prints are interspersed within the author and subject indices.

All in all it is a useful *vade mecum* for the practising cytologist.

OAN HUSAIN

Interpretation of clinical chemistry laboratory data. CG Fraser. (Pp 178; paperback £8.50.) Blackwells. 1986. ISBN 0-632-01579-9.

This handy pocket sized book contains much useful information on many peripheral components of analytical chemistry. The stated object is to provide information on the numerical aspects of the interpretation of clinical chemistry and on the many factors other than disease affecting the final result. The author succeeds in achieving this, although it is doubtful if many of the people at whom the book is aimed will find the information unique. There are useful chapters on laboratory terminology, reference values, analytical concepts and biological variation, in which simple illustrations are used to describe some of the more widely used terminology of the clinical chemistry laboratory.

The chapter on preanalytical factors describes the effects of food and drink intake, alcohol intake, posture, stress, pregnancy, exercise, inpatient stay, and drug administration on the final analytical result. It is doubtful if many of these topics are ever

mentioned on the laboratory request form.

A useful read, but more for the trainee than the trained laboratory worker to whom most of the concepts will be well known.

GW PENNINGTON

Automation and Quality Assurance in Haematology. Ed RM Rowan, JM England. (Pp 355; £42.) Blackwells. 1986. ISBN 0-632-01186-6.

Haematology increasingly demands automation, and haematologists need to keep abreast of this field to retain control of their laboratories in the face of technical advances. The well known authors contributing to this volume describe automated equipment and quality assurance across the full range of haematological activities. A light editorial hand is evident but many of the authors have drawn on ICSH documents and this sets the book's measured style. Idiosyncrasies such as "Skewhart" for "Shewhart" and "Statistical results" for "stat results" may irritate, but only the incomplete description of statistical quality control techniques is potentially misleading. The difficulty in keeping up to date in this field is enormous. Although the references extend up to 1986, it is a great pity that the newest blood counters such as the Technicon H1, Sysmex E 5000, and the promised Coulter STKR could not be included. Some discussion of microtitre plate techniques and blood bank computing systems now available would also have been valuable.

Although this topic may lack excitement, it is worthy of consideration by everyone in haematology, and this volume makes a gallant attempt to meet a real need.

I CAVILL

Pathology of the Pancreas. AH Cruickshank. (Pp 275; 267 figures; £74.) Springer. 1986. ISBN 3-540-16216-X.

This book will have to compete for sales with two other good recent publications on pancreatic pathology which have beaten it on to the bookshelves: *Pancreatic Pathology* by Kloppel and Heitz (Churchill Livingstone) and the AFIP Fascicle on *Tumours of the Pancreas*. This latest book, however, has certain features which commend it over the other two. It is much more comprehensive than the Fascicle which, though much cheaper, only deals with tumours. Being a single author work it certainly scores over Kloppel and Heitz in terms of style and appears more comprehensive. It contains 267 good quality illustrations, and, as well as the conventional chapters, includes chapters on

the effects of arterial disease on the pancreas and the effects on the pancreas of diseases of various organs and systems. I particularly like the way the author deals with the difficult area of aetiology of exocrine pancreatic carcinoma. Though £74.00 may seem rather a lot for a book of 275 pages, I would consider it to be very good value.

DA LEVISON

Quantitative Receptor Autoradiography. Neurology and Neurobiology Vol 19. Ed CA Boast, Elaine W Snowhill, CA Altar. (Pp 296; £35.) Alan R Liss. 1986. ISBN 0-8451-2721-7.

This volume is a fascinating "state of the art" review of the techniques and results of quantitative receptor autoradiography applied to the central nervous system. Throughout, the advantages over biochemical methods are emphasised and made manifestly clear: quantitative receptor autoradiography is considerably more sensitive and it enables more precise localisation of receptor mapping. Over 30 receptors are now measurable by this technique and quantitative analysis of digitised autoradiographic images permits calculation of saturation kinetics. The book also contains some vivid illustrations of colour enhanced digitised images. Most of the chapters deal with in vitro labelling or in vivo labelling in animals. The final chapter, however, gives an insight into the potential impact of positron emission tomography for in vivo studies in humans.

Although this book has little relevance to the activities of most general diagnostic laboratories, it will be of much interest to neuropathologists and neuropharmacologists. Those of us interested in receptors outside the central nervous system will be tempted to speculate as to how the application of the sophisticated techniques described in this book will advantage our own areas of study. It would be a pity, therefore, if this erudite publication was neglected by the wider readership it deserves.

JCE UNDERWOOD

The Human Thymus. Histophysiology and Pathology. Current Topics in Pathology. (Pp 275; DM 186.) Springer. 1986. ISBN 3-540-15311-X.

There can be no doubt that this interesting book fulfils its main purpose in providing detailed information with regard to the structure and function of the thymus and how these are interrelated under normal conditions or deranged during pathological

J Clin Pathol 1987; 40: 358-361