
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 with the author and subject indices.

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

OAN HUSAIN


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


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


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 in 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


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 by 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


There can be no doubt that this interesting book fulfills 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 conditions.
processes. It must be said, however, that the information does not always come in a readily digested form. In no sense can this be regarded as a book to which one would turn for casual reference. That is not to say that valuable diagnostic and clinical data are not available, particularly with regard to immune deficiency states, myasthenia gravis, and thymic tumours, only that assimilation requires some concentration. The effort is worthwhile as anyone who wishes to make a serious study of the thymus or to understand the disease processes with which it is afflicted will find this carefully annotated and illustrated account of this enigmatic organ indispensable.

FD LEE


Human cytogenetics has developed considerably in the past 20 years or so, and there have been a plethora of texts dealing with the more medical aspects of the subject. But very few have been devoted to practical details, and this current volume will therefore be particularly welcomed by laboratory cytogeneticists. There are in all seven chapters which deal with tissue culture methods, lymphocyte culture, chromosome staining and banding techniques, analysis and interpretation of karyotypes, diagnosis of malignancy from chromosome preparations, meiotic studies, and finally some specialist techniques currently used in research such as in situ hybridisation, somatic cell hybridisation, and flow cytometry. Each chapter is illustrated with photomicrographs and simple line drawings, and concludes with a list of references. There is an appendix of suppliers of reagents and equipment and an index.

Inevitably, there is some overlap between some of the contributors—for example, in discussions of the demonstration and clinical importance of the fragile-X. But all the contributors present an essentially practical approach. The chapter on the analysis and interpretation of karyotypes by Jonasson is particularly good, and could be profitably read by all those in any way concerned with managing patients and their families with a chromosome abnormality. This little book can be highly recommended, particularly to those working in the laboratory aspects of human cytogenetics.

AEH EMERY


This book sets out “to serve as an interpretive and methodologic source” of immunohistological techniques. It can be purchased alone or, for an extra sum, together with a set of colour transparencies of selected pictures from the book. Although many pictures are of good quality, others are poor and fail to show points described in the legends. Other pictures are repetitious. The text is generally accurate, if a little turgid. Although published in mid 1986, I could only find two references dated after 1984, and much is already out of date: the value of intermediate filament markers, for example, is only superficially discussed. The book has here been read by junior and senior members of both medical and technical staff, and their unimpressed view has been that the book is only of limited value. This is an expensive “coffee table” book, and few departments could justify such an unnecessary luxury in these days of relative austerity.

PA HALL

**Correction**

Figs 2a and 2b were inadvertently transposed on page 152, volume 40 No 2 in the paper, New marker of B lymphocytes, MB2: comparison with other lymphocyte subset markers active in conventionally processed tissue sections, by PA Hall et al.

**Notices**

**The Leeds Course in Clinical Nutrition**

**September 8–11, 1987**

Both participants and exhibitors should apply for further particulars to:

Director of Continuing Education

The University

Leeds, LS2 9JT

**Festschrift for**

**Professor David AG Galton, MD, FRCP, OBE**

A one day scientific meeting on acute and chronic leukaemias followed by a dinner in honour of Professor DAG Galton, director of the MRC Leukaemia Unit, on the occasion of his retirement, will take place at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, London, W12, on Friday, October 9, 1987. People interested in participating should contact Dr D Catovsky, MRC Leukaemia Unit, Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Ducane Road, London, W12 0HS. Telephone: 01-740 3237 (direct line).

**ACP Locum Bureau**

The Association of Clinical Pathologists runs a locum bureau for consultant pathologists.

Applicants with the MRC Path who would like to do locums and anyone requiring a locum should contact Dr David Melcher, Histopathology Department, Sussex County Hospital, Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE.

**Haematology in ethnic minorities**

**Friday 15 May 1987**

**Hillingdon Hospital, Oxbridge**

**Programme:**

Recent advances in the diagnosis and treatment of thalassaemia by Dr RE Marcus, Hillingdon Hospital; Red cell enzymes by Professor Luzzatto, Royal Postgraduate Medical School; Sickle cell anaemia in the United Kingdom by Dr M Brozovic, Central Middlesex Hospital; Anaemia in children by Dr DP Addy, Dudley Road Hospital, Birmingham; An unusual anaemia in an Asian girl by Dr G Robbins, Royal Surrey County Hospital; Anaemia in vegetarians by Dr I Chanarin, Northwick Park Hospital.

Further details from: Dr RP Britt, Department of Haematology, Hillingdon Hospital, Uxbridge, Middlesx UB8 3NN.

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