

**A Guide to Diagnostic Clinical Chemistry.** 2nd ed. RN Walmsley and GH White. (Pp 513; £24.50.) Blackwells. 1988. ISBN 0-86793-040-3.

The authors have taken the investigations that commonly form the tariff of chemical pathology departments of district general hospitals and have given a lucid account of the place of these procedures in diagnosis and patient management. The first chapter is devoted to a general discussion of the interpretation of test results. Each of the subsequent chapters deals specifically with a group of related tests and provides a concise description of basic physiology together with a discussion of interpretation and clinical relevance, illustrated by brief case reports.

This is not a book for the reader who is new to the subject because fundamental knowledge is assumed; nor, on the other hand, is it a source of erudite information on rare disorders. It is an account of chemical pathology in day to day hospital practice and, as such, it is an excellent training manual for junior pathologists and biochemists. Trainee physicians and surgeons also would benefit from including it in their studies.

E GOWLAND

**Growth Factors and Oncogenes in Breast Cancer.** Ellis Horwood Series in Biomedicine. Ed M Sluysen. (Pp 208; DM 105.) VCH. 1987. ISBN 3-527-26559-7.

Breast cancer is a serious misfortune for those who develop it, but it is an excellent model for the study of human malignancy. Because these lesions, unless ulcerated, are rarely exposed to the risk of environmental contamination, they are ideal for a wide range of in vitro studies. Because they arise in an organ that has relatively well understood responses to changes in the hormonal milieu, they are suitable for the study of the way in which these responses are either preserved or disturbed in neoplasia. Because the lesion is common, many can be studied and the results are far from anecdotal. Thus more is known about the molecular biology of breast cancer than of probably any other single tumour type, and we hope that the lessons learned can be translated to other tumours that are less easy to study.

This book features 10 illuminating chapters on breast cancer research encompassing the structure and function of steroid receptors, the role of oncogenes, peptide growth factors, chromosomal abnormalities,

epidemiology, dietary factors, and therapy. The contributions appear authoritative and include a considerable amount of recent work. The editing might have been a little tighter; the use of headings and subheadings has been somewhat inconsistent between chapters and some authors seem to have strayed from their brief (if they were given one), as in the chapter by Harris and Neal on EGF and its receptor which covers a good deal more than breast cancer. I know from bitter experience that compiling an index is an unenviable task, but this one does not do justice to the scope of the book. For example, it cites "coffee", "Krüppel gene", and "Seventh Day Adventists" among a mere 121 entries, but ignores many other more important topics for which readers may be searching. I am also constantly irritated by the practice of referring busy users of an index from one entry to its synonym "(eg 'Erb-B2 gene. See: neu gene')" instead of simply giving the page numbers. But these are minor gripes.

Those engaged in breast cancer research will undoubtedly find this an invaluable source of useful information on the molecular biology of the disease, and I believe that in many respects the lessons we learn from this particular cancer will be of wider interest. The book is reasonably priced.

JCE UNDERWOOD

**Videopathology Seminars: Clinicopathological Case Studies.** Robert Goudie. Glasgow University. Price on application.

This series of videotape post mortem demonstrations by Professor Goudie of Glasgow Royal Infirmary is an excellent introduction to gross pathology for medical students and will serve tyro pathologists well in how to perform and show a necropsy.

Each tape consists of three to five programmes lasting from five to 25 minutes. There is a concise clinical history setting out the problems for the pathologist followed by a presentation of the salient facts found at necropsy. Professor Goudie makes explanations and teaching points using a question and answer format to stimulate audience participation.

Each pathological lesson is very well demonstrated; the colour balance is good and close-up views show macroscopic points to best advantage. The gross appearances are integrated with microscopic views and these seem to have been chosen to illustrate normal histology and basic pathological

processes. Selective use of radiographs and laboratory investigations from other disciplines stress the importance of clinico-pathological correlations.

These tapes were originally prepared for teaching large undergraduate classes in countries where the necropsy rate is very low, but have proved very popular with Glasgow undergraduates. We have used them at St Bartholomew's for the past six months and they have been a resounding success: the students respond well to Goudie's lucid presentation. They do not replace seeing real post mortems but it is very encouraging to see students clustered about the sets obviously enjoying a Scots teaching session. One of them thought the voice-over was Sean Connery!

We have made some videotapes ourselves and the amount of effort required to produce highly professional tapes is very great indeed. That Goudie has succeeded so well is a credit to him and to the team who helped him.

G SLAVIN

## Notices

**1989. XI IPPA Advanced Course in Paediatric Pathology, Humleboek, Denmark August 27-September 2 1989.**

A residential course to cover topics in fetal, perinatal, and paediatric pathology.

Further information from Dr JW Keeling, Department of Paediatric Pathology, John Radcliffe Maternity Hospital, Headington, Oxford, OX3 9DU.

**International symposium and tutorial on genital papillomavirus infections: advances in modern diagnosis and therapy February 3-5, 1989, Hamburg, West Germany.**

Further details from: Professor Gross, Congress Organisation, SFK, Sander Fach kongress, Organisation Blumenav, 2000 Hamburg 76, Federal Republic of Germany.

### 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 DH Orrell, Department of Pathology, Royal Lancaster Infirmary, Ashton Road, Lancaster LA1 4RP.