

Book reviews

evidence showing similarities between craniopharyngioma and adamantinoma of the jaw.

I am delighted that a fifth edition has appeared. It will remain the standard work on the pathology of tumours of the nervous system for some time yet. The book has increased considerably in thickness; as a result it is now not so comfortable to handle and only reads with ease when opened towards the centre of the book. It is now truly a reference book rather than a "readers" book.

WR TIMPERLEY

Practical Medical Microbiology. 13th ed. Ed JG Collee, JP Duguid, AG Fraser, BP Marmion (Pp 918; £29.50.) Churchill Livingstone. 1989. ISBN 0-443-02323-8.

Volume 1 of the 13th edition of Mackie and McCartney's *Medical Microbiology* appeared in 1978. Here at last is volume 2, but issued as a stand alone manual of laboratory practice, with a new title to reflect this status.

The first 15 chapters cover the basics of diagnostic microbiology. Much of the material is difficult to find in a collated form elsewhere. Thus the chapters on microscopy, staining, media preparation and safety are essential reading for all aspiring microbiologists. The use of kits is scantily dealt with, and a discriminating paragraph would have been helpful. The next 23 chapters describe identification methods for various groups of bacteria. The style of confining detailed methodology to the end of each chapter makes for easy reading or reference. The virology section is geared to the non-specialist laboratory and not intended to be exhaustive.

Overall, the book is a success. More could have been said on quality control and on systemic fungal infections. There are minor discrepancies in areas of overlap between chapters, but these reflect an inexact science.

The book is reasonably priced, and should not be relegated to the departmental library. A personal copy is highly recommended.

GL RIDGWAY

Endocrine-Dependent Breast Cancer: Critical Assessment of Recent Advances. Ed RJ Santen, E Juhos. (Pp 105; \$22.) Hans Huber Publishers. 1989. ISBN 0-920887-37-6.

This book consists of a series of short papers presented to a symposium supported by Ciba-Geigy at the 14th International Cancer

Congress held in Budapest during 1986. It is almost exclusively devoted to studies of steroid metabolism, their receptors, and their effects on experimental mammary tumours and advanced human breast cancer. Brief mention is made of some growth factors. The main thrust of the book is to consider possible therapeutic implications. Probably this reflects the intended readership.

As an outsider to this particular field of breast cancer studies, I found this book unsatisfactory. This was not because of the presentations, which in themselves are clear and well illustrated. The main defect is the overall lack of orientation and editorial linkage. The brief discussion at the end of the book helps no further. I suspect that most pathologists would have welcomed a broad synopsis of the current direction and earlier progress in the topic and related areas. Alas, for that the general reader will have to go elsewhere.

JD DAVIES

Statistics with Confidence. Confidence Intervals and Statistical Guidelines. MJ Gardner, DG Altman. (Pp 140; soft cover UK £7.95; abroad £9.50.) British Medical Journal. 1989. ISBN 0-7279-0222-9.

This book is ideal for medical personnel with a good knowledge of basic statistics. The authors emphasise on several occasions that basic statistical knowledge is assumed. They also state that those with limited understanding of statistical procedures should seek the advice of a statistician at the planning stage of a research project, but many references to textbooks and more detailed papers are given in the book, in addition to a section explaining the mathematical notation used throughout.

Medical journals now expect papers to be submitted quoting confidence intervals where appropriate, and *Statistics with Confidence* contains very good explanations of the reasons for using confidence intervals, how to calculate them, and many relevant worked examples. These who are intimidated by mathematical notation may need help from an expert at this stage. There are also frequent references to a computer program specially designed by the authors to assist with calculating confidence intervals. This will be reviewed in due course.

The statistical guidelines and checklists give a comprehensive guide on how to design, analyse, and write up a medical research project. These sections of the book must be excellent references for both potential authors and journal staff.

LINDA M ANDERSON

Man-made Mineral Fibres and Radon. IARC Monographs on the Evaluations of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans. Vol. 43. (Pp 300; Sw fr 65.) World Health Organisation. 1988. ISBN 92-832-1243-6.

The monographs of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) provide unique assessments of the carcinogenic risks to man. They are well known to toxicologists and they deserve much more attention by medical scientists as sources of information and expert judgements which show the interplay between medicine, industry, and the regulation that is coming to underly the public health.

This volume follows the typical format of describing the nature, occurrence, and analytical methods, followed by epidemiological and experimental data, and a final evaluation of carcinogenic risk to man.

It deals first with 'man-made mineral fibres', including domestic glass, wool, and other materials. They are important in their own right as insulation and as a replacement for asbestos. Many experiments and remarkable epidemiological surveys have shown that some types may pose a risk to man, although modern controls make them most safe to use. Why tumours are formed is not known, but the experiments are helping to show some of the mechanisms of tumorigenesis.

The other substance discussed is radon. Although probably the oldest known industrial carcinogen, its environmental importance is a recent discovery. Again, the experimental and epidemiological work are fertile examples for teaching, as is the estimation of the dose response of lung cancer to inhaled radon. That clone deserves attention in a country troubled by Sellafield and its α -emitters, but of greater interest are the recent suggestions that in certain areas of the world radon in houses could be the cause of up to 15% of lung cancer in the general public. How will science and society face up to that?

This book should be absorbed by everyone interested in quantitative medicine and used by anyone arguing about public health hazards and their relief.

AD DAYAN

Postgraduate Haematology. 3rd ed. Ed AV Hoffbrand and SM Lewis. (Pp 715; £60.) Heinemann Medical Books. 1989. ISBN 0-433-15054-8.

From the time of its first edition in 1972 'Hoffbrand and Lewis' has been one of the standard textbooks for a generation of