never high enough to inhibit bone cell function significantly.

The "unrecognised substance that inhibits the aluminium technique" is much less mysterious than it at first appears. The aluminium technique is undertaken at acid pH. Even in the short time that the stain solution is applied to the tissue, the acid conditions initiate decalcification with the result that the local concentrations of calcium and phosphate at bone surfaces (including the cut surface of the trabeculae and cortices) are high. It has been known since 1954[3] that high phosphate ion concentrations inhibit the aluminium staining reaction and this is almost certainly the cause of the observed failure of staining.

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2 Denton J, Freemont AJ, Ball J. Detection and distribution of aluminium in bone. *J Clin Pathol* 1985;**37**:136–42.
3 Vogel AJ. *A text book of macro- and semimicroqualitative inorganic analysis*. 4th ed. London: Longmans, 1954.

Fungus ball of the urinary tract

I read with interest the account by Morton *et al* of urinary bladder fungus ball in a man of 71.[1] As they comment, there is scant mention of this condition, few cases having been reported, but thrush of the urinary bladder was reviewed by Winner and Hurley[2] and, more recently, candida pyelonephritis has been reviewed by Odds,[3] who observed that diabetes is the most common single underlying condition. Hurley and Winner published an illustrated account of the pathogenesis of experimentally induced renal candidosis, with a brief review of cases in man affecting the upper renal tract.[4] Hydronephrosis with formation of fungus ball in the pelvis of the ureter is a feature of this rare disease. The fungus ball described in the bladder by Morton *et al* may well have had its origin in fungal pyelonephritis.

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1 Morton KM, Robertson AJ, McIntyre J. Urinary bladder fungus ball. *J Clin Pathol* 1988;**41**:1243–4.
2 Winner HI, Hurley R. *Candida albicans*. London: Churchill, 1964:158.
3 Odds FC. *Candida and candidosis*. 2nd Edition. London: Baillière Tindall, 1988:170–4.
4 Hurley R, Winner HI. Renal moniliasis in the mouse. *J Pathol Bacteriol* 1963;**86**:75–82.

Some new titles

The receipt of books is acknowledged, and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the sender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits.

An Endoscopic Approach to Bilio-Pancreatic Disease. L Familiari. (Pp 196; £33.) Piccin Nuova Librerta, S.p.A., Padua, Italy; distributed by Gazelle Book Services, Lancaster. 1988. ISBN 88-299-0404-X.

Directory of Ongoing Research in Cancer Epidemiology. Ed MP Coleman, J Wahrendorf. IARC Scientific Publications No. 93. (Pp 662; £26.) Oxford University Press. 1988. ISBN 92 832 1193 6.

From Hippocrates to Virchow: Reflections on Human Disease. JM Byers. (Pp 160; $32.) Raven Press. 1988. ISBN 0-89189-257-5.

The Biochemical Pathology of Astrocytes. Neurology and Neurobiology. Vol 39. Ed MD Norenberg, L Hertz, A Schousboe. (Pp 662; $118.) Alan R Liss. 1988. ISBN 0-8451-2741-1.

Quantitative Bioassay. Analytical Chemistry by Open Learning. D Hawcroft, T Hector, F Rowell. (Pp 300; soft cover £11·50.) John Wiley. 1987. ISBN 0-471-91401-0.