should be used, and when, and what the results mean, etc. The only methods described in detail are the classic Kabat and Mayer CH50 technique, and, incredibly, a semiquantitative immunochemical assessment of C1 esterase inhibitor by Ouchterlony double diffusion.

It has a section on other serum proteins and cytokines, but almost all the methodology is derived from the use of commercial kits. There are no useful practical hints on measuring cytokines. The chapter on phagocytes is mostly theory on the type of abnormalities which occur in clinical practice. The only test procedure described is the screening nitro blue tetrazolium reduction test.

About a third of the book is concerned with infectious disease serology. While these are undoubtedly tests using immunological methodology, they are regarded in this country as being in the intellectual and practical arena of diagnostic microbiology. Laboratory tests in medical immunology are mainly applied to the assessment of abnormalities of the immune system.

The last four chapters are on tests in allergy and autoimmunity and those for tumour markers and HLA antigens. Again, most of the procedures described rely on the use of commercial kits, the Abbot enzyme immunoassay kit being described for the measurement of total IgE. But while a number of pitfalls and problems of the test were described, no mention was made of tests for specific IgE antibodies and their clinical importance.

A major flaw throughout is that little mention is made of the problems of standards—for the analytes and for the reagents. Nor is enough emphasis given to quality control, both internal and external quality assurance. No mention is made of the techniques of molecular biology, which, in 1991, is surprising.

Overall, this book is disappointing. It has too many omissions and places too much reliance on kits available in the American market to be of much practical value to laboratory immunologists in the United Kingdom.

RA THOMPSON

Papillomaviruses in Human Pathology: Recent Progress in Epidermoid Precancers (Sero Symposium Publications from Raven Press, Vol 78). Ed J Monsonogo. (Pp 555; \$109.) Raven Press. 1990. ISBN 0-88167-674-8.

This is volume 78 of the Sero Symposium Publications Series begun in 1982, and contains the contributions to a symposium of the above title held in 1990: the papers have been reproduced with little or no editing, reflecting a variety of both presentation and quality. Sixty contributions to the symposia are included under seven separate headings of fundamental aspects (six papers), gynaecology (16 papers), dermatology (six papers), proctology (eight papers), supra-diaphragmatic sites (10 papers), the laboratory detection of HPV DNA (11 papers), and basic research (three papers). Each paper is essentially a review of a subject by an author or group of authors, and each paper is referenced to 1988/89. In total, over 150 authors have contributed to the volume of over 550 pages.

Contributions to the proceedings come from numerous laboratories in Europe, the USA, and Canada, but over two thirds are from France; the book suffers a little from this chauvinism because some topics could have been dealt with more authoritatively by research groups who were not represented. The symposium covered a wide field, and each contribution reviews one aspect of the subject matter: this includes contributions from basic scientists and virologists, physicians, surgeons, paediatricians, pathologists and psychologists. For specialists, there is little that has not been published before on his or her specialty, but the contributions on subjects peripheral to specific interests represent a competent review of published findings.

The book will not be essential to individual researchers working specifically in one of the various aspects of the subject, and it is very expensive. The book would be of value in a library of a large department or hospital where access to reviews on subjects related to a specialist interest are required. Finally, the subject of the symposium is moving rapidly: because the book contains little opinion and speculation for the future, it will probably soon become dated.

CW POTTER

Leukaemia Diagnosis. A Guide to the FAB Classification. BJ Bain. (Pp 116; £39.50.) Gower Medical Publishing. 1990. ISBN 0-397-44608-X.

Titles are more important than many authors realise. One might be forgiven for assuming that this book is simply about the FAB typing of leukaemias, but one would be wrong. It is a comprehensive practical guide to the diagnosis and classification of all types of leukaemia and myelodysplasia, and offers a broad current review of the morphological, cytochemical, immunological and cytogenetic features of malignant blood disorders. The text is complemented by copious high quality colour figures and attractive easy-to-read colour-coded tables and diagrams.

Dr Bain is to be congratulated on assembling such a work and presenting it in an admirably succinct and readable way. It neatly fills a gap in the market and will prove invaluable to all haematologists of all levels of experience; the trainee struggling to learn the craft, the generalist confronted with a "difficult" leukaemia, and (perhaps most importantly) the expert who needs a surreptitious source of reference for reassurance.

Because of the pace of developments in molecular and cytogenetics, the half life of at least some sections of the book will be short, so it is to be hoped that the author is already at work on the second edition.

JS LILLEYMAN

Childhood Leukemia: Present Problems and Future Aspects. Proceedings of the Second International Symposium on Children's Cancer. 1989. Tokyo. Eds N Kobayashi, T Akera, S Mizutani. (Pp 265; £40.50.) Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1991. ISBN 0-7923-1138-8.

Eighteen months ago a symposium was held in Tokyo to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Children's Cancer Association of Japan at which 13 eminent speakers from Germany, the USA and the UK joined with 20 local speakers to produce what looks like an exciting meeting. I suppose it's incumbent on me as a reviewer to produce the usual tedious list of contents—biology, epidemiology, treatment, and supportive care of childhood leukaemia, to cut a long story short.

I certainly found the book interesting, and it would be of some value to anyone willing to while away a few days trying to bring themselves up to date. Each contribution at least has the considerable merit of brevity. It goes without saying that the quality of contribution varies enormously and it is a good example of how this type of text rarely conveys the vibrancy of the meeting. Examples of the problems of this genre are the anecdotal and skimpy nature of the contribution on infection and the more artistic than scientific nature of the transplant review. I find selective conglomerations of other people's non-randomised bone marrow transplant data, with minimal information to make it meaningful (when was the relapse and where and at what age, etc), of absolutely no value whatsoever in planning treatment. Surely the day of these pedlars of survival curves is over. I also despair when within a few pages one finds results of leukaemia treatment expressed as event free interval, survival, event free rate, event free survival and leukaemia free survival, not to mention the various stratifications for varying risk factors. What am I supposed to make of this? Not a lot, frankly, but an authoritative review of all of these chauvinistic points of view might have educated me rather than making me feel that they are neatly demonstrating various ways of skinning a cat.

Shivers run down my spine when I see a section devoted to psychosocial support. This was better than most, and some of it was even understandable. The United Kingdom contribution, in particular, was written in English and contained thoughtful views. It would be immensely valuable if there was an international convention to ban the use of the following words from such chapters: joinder, experiential, critiquing, caregiver, impacts, renege, outreach, collegial, empowerment, wellness, socialization, kids and networking. This would perhaps help to avoid the usual oleaginous or dolorous approaches.

That having been said, I really did learn a lot from the excellent biology and epidemiology sections, although it is now time to spare us from the multitudinous tedious gels. The information on late effects would have been greatly enhanced by contributions from international experts.

IAN M HANN

Medical Laboratory Haematology. 2nd ed. R Hall, RG Malia. (Pp 736; £60.00.) Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd. 1991. ISBN 0-7506-1000-X.

When I reviewed the first edition of this text elsewhere in 1984, I remarked that, in its field, it was a "tour de force". It still is. Not