

books on flow cytometry which have come on the market in the last few years, there are several I would purchase before this book. However if you are embarking on a PhD in this area then this book would be very valuable.

P QUIRKE

Manual of Quantitative Pathology in Cancer Diagnosis and Prognosis. JPA Baak (Pp 616; 192 figures; DM 350.) Springer Verlag. 1991. ISBN 3-540-51275-6.

The first book *A Manual of Morphometry in Diagnostic Pathology*, published in 1983 was found to be very useful by people involved in quantitative pathology. It was a small book, frequently borrowed, but less frequently returned.

This book has the same format and the early part of both books is very similar. The remainder of the book, however, is full of new material, providing the reader with a wealth of information. There is a complete section on techniques and equipment which will be helpful to those lacking such knowledge. Topics described include stereology, cytometry, image cytometry, flow cytometry and laser scanning microscopy. The section on image processing, although welcome, may appear too involved for those lacking specific knowledge.

The section on applications is much more comprehensive than before and is likely to be of value, irrespective of the specific interest of the reader. These items are written by experts in the respective fields. There are additional chapters to the first edition on the use of expert systems, neural nets, teaching, and more.

Occasionally there is a sense of *déjà vu* when reading a chapter which, although it has been expanded and is still relevant, reads like the first version and shares many of the figures.

There are, inevitably, occasions when readers may question some of the statements. This serves to make the book more stimulating. In addition, it is very comprehensive, highly informative, and will become as widely read as its predecessor.

C SOWTER

Multipoint Methods in the Clinical Laboratory. A Handbook. M Faiers, R George, J Jolly, P Wheat. (Pp 95; Paperback £6.95.) PHLS Publications. 1991. ISBN 0 901144 28 2.

Mechanisation or even automation of repetitive processes in the microbiology laboratory has much to commend it. Not least in these troubled times is the potential for reducing the unit costs of routine tests. This slim volume is an introduction to the application of multipoint technology in the diagnostic laboratory. Chapters include identification of Gram positive and Gram negative bacteria, urine testing, application of computers and antimicrobial sensitivity testing. The latter chapter occupies almost half the book, reflecting the wider experience with this particular topic. At first sight, the book appears to be a manual to allow others to proceed. Disappointingly, further reading shows that this is not the case. The book provides no more than an introduction to the subject, highlighting many of the pitfalls. The impression is given that there is far to go before potential gremlins are removed and reliable and consis-

tent results can be expected. Indeed, I gained the impression that this is best left to commercial enterprise.

The book is not well written, repetition and inconsistencies—for example, *M morgani* and *P morgani*—are irritating. The BSMT clearly has an identity crisis—is the Society “microbial” or “multipoint”?

The book is modestly priced and therefore worth a read if only to provide food for thought. There is no question that multipoint technology has an important role in reference and research work, but I was unconvinced that it is ready for widespread use in the diagnostic laboratory.

GL RIDGWAY

Foodborne Illness—A Lancet Review. Ed Advisers WM Waites, JP Arbuthnott. (Pp 146; £9.95.) Hodder & Stoughton. 1991. ISBN 0-340-55570-X.

The high level of public concern about food safety reflects its importance as a public health issue and is shown by constant media interest, acceptance by the government of the report of its Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food (Richmond Committee), and the passing of the Food Safety Act (1990). This timely *Lancet* review, one of a series of reviews on current themes, sets out to explain the causes and extent of foodborne illnesses and what can be done about them. The 22 contributors are international experts from the United Kingdom and North America who have written concise reviews of 17 topics which were published in the *Lancet* in 1990 and are collected together in this slim and attractive book. The foreword by the editor of the *Lancet*, Robin Fox, sets the scene and is followed by an overview of foodborne illness, descriptions of its epidemiology here and in North America, a review of sources of infection and accounts of food legislation. Next are reviews of illnesses caused by specific bacterial pathogens such as salmonellae and staphylococci, then viruses, and protozoa. The last two reviews are of natural foodborne toxicants and bovine spongiform encephalopathy. Each review is followed by a list of references. This book is a mine of information: it should be read by all microbiologists and others with an interest in foodborne diseases and represents excellent value at the price.

RN PEEL

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