BOOK REVIEWS

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This book comprises two parts: the first consists of graded multiple choice questions and the second case studies where clinical details are supplied together with the laboratory results.

There are 10 multiple choice tests, each containing 20 questions. These have been primarily designed for students of the HNC/ D, BSc, Fellowship of the IMLS and MSc courses, but as mentioned in the preface, these questions will be of value to candidates preparing for the MRCPPath examination. The questions cover a wide range of general and specialised aspects of laboratory haematology and the author is to be congratulated on the quality of the questions and the general layout. The answers are accompanied by helpful and relevant comments, together with the titles of textbooks suitable for appropriate further reading.

In the introduction to the section on clinical studies it is stated that a final FIMLS student should expect to score consistently above 80%. This statement reflects the easier standard of clinical knowledge required and may not be so helpful to candidates for the MRCPPath examination as the first section of this book.

This book is very reasonably priced and the first part, especially, is recommended to all who wish to practice self-assessment in haematology.

JOHN D M RICHARDS


This colour atlas is primarily for use by undergraduates as an aid in practical classes and for their private study. However, I am sure that new postgraduate trainees in pathology, trainee surgeons, and MLSO staff would all find this atlas useful. The text is concise and relevant, simplifying complex pathology well without producing inaccuracies. The four authors devote about a third of the atlas to basic pathological processes, the remaining two thirds covering systemic pathology—about 10 pages per system. The colour photomicrographs are generally of a very high standard, are clearly labelled, and usually relate to text on the same page. Many of the illustrations have black letters superimposed over specific areas such as MM for muscularis mucosae, etc, and this is undoubtedly helpful for the complete novice.

The balance of text and illustration is good and the authors have refrained from illustrating too many rarities "just because they have an excellent example" and it is difficult with some other atlases. This atlas is in direct competition with the Colour Atlas of Histopathology (R C Curran, published by Harvey Miller) and is a very similar price. Basic Histopathology is shorter and has fewer illustrations, and I would favour this atlas for the undergraduate student. Curran’s atlas has slightly more depth for the young pathologist.

ARCHIE J MALCOLM


This is a laboratory manual intended for use in laboratories where diagnostic immunology tests are performed. It has been designed for technicians and laboratory scientists to use at the bench and provides details of both the techniques and difficulties which may arise when performing these tests. It is clear and detailed, with good section headings and excellent comments.

The content is somewhat uneven: 118 pages are devoted to complement assays and only one to the detection of autoantibodies. Although IgG subclass measurements by ELISA are described in some detail, little discussion of the measurement of total immunoglobulins is given. Immunoelctrophoresis is described in the context of C3 breakdown products, but not in relation to its more common use in detecting paraproteins. Although sections on standards and controls are given for each method, some of the recommendation for determining normal ranges are bizarre. Quality control is mentioned only in the section on lymphocyte phenotyping which is unfortunate, given the plethora of quality control schemes, both national and international. It is disappointing that there is little clinical interpretation.

In United Kingdom clinical immunology laboratories this manual will be seen as incomplete. Laboratories wanting to start complement assays will find the first third of the book invaluable. For those looking for a more balanced view, it will be disappointing. At £35.00 it is good value provided this imbalance is appreciated.

H CHAPEL


Having just returned from Vellore with several unidentifiable specimens, I was particularly interested in this volume in the editorial office naturally attracted my attention. I was immediately reassured that I was unlikely to get onchocerciasis or loa loa (wrong country) or guinea worm (wrong vector) but alarmed to learn that, as well as malaria, I might have contracted filariasis (Wuchereria bancrofti) or even Kala Azar. I read on. I could not determine from the information provided what type of malaria I might have, as no geographical distribution of the different parasites is given (though little maps are drawn for many other parasites, so this seems odd). All I could do, I decided, was to wait for the symptoms to appear, get a stained film, and then use the lovely illustrations to identify the parasite on morphological grounds. Then I began to worry about amebiasis. Again, no indication whether I was more likely to have picked it up than if I had been to Scarborough (possibly not), but given a microscope and an unstained wet stool specimen I would easily be able to recognise the difference between Entamoeba histolytica and Entamoeba coli.

In summary, this is a large format picture book with much useful information and many beautiful drawings (not photographs). It is more than a coffee-table volume, but would not do as a reference work, nor does it pretend to be one. The three-part format of the original edition has been lost and now the work is simply divided into the two logical parts to the book. The first and major part is taken up with methodology. It begins with the basic techniques of agglutination, complement fixation, and then concludes with the latest in diagnostic techniques—immuno blotting, cloning of microbial antigens, preparation of mono- and polyclonal antibodies, DNA probes and PCR. Each chapter contains a full description of the technique, interpretation of results, and the drawbacks. An especially useful section is entitled “troubleshooting dot-immunoblotting” which has some problems as low transfer efficiency, patchy or diffused transfer, excessive current, absent or weak staining reactions and high background. Remedies for these problems are given. The chapter on monoclonal antibodies gives a detailed account of the techniques used to produce one’s own murine monoclonal antibodies. This first part of the book closes with a chapter on the procedures involved in optimising PCR for diagnostic purposes and illustrating the applications of PCR to the detection of several infectious agents. The second and condensed part concentrates on the diagnosis of infectious diseases by serology. It is covered in three chapters—bacterial, viral, and fungal infections. But why no chapter on protozoal infections, an infectious scourge in many parts of the world? Such a chapter would have been more useful and interesting than regurgitating the usual well worn methods for diagnosing syphilis. Apart from this minor criticism, I found this book easy to read, well set out, with much to commend it.

R C SPENCER
sections of helminths and protozoa. There is no guidance on treatment and no suggestion where such advice might be obtained (or any other information—the book contains no references). Perhaps it is best considered as a useful tool for workers in routine microbiology departments who occasionally have to look for parasites with which they are not familiar.

JS LILLEYMAN


Changes in cardiovascular medicine and surgery over the past 50 years require that the pathologist is fully integrated into the cardiovascular team. Previously the pathologist often stood alone, demonstrating his findings with little hope that much could be done to treat the many diseases encountered. The situation has changed.

Dissection of the heart must relate to the results of investigations made in life, such as the results of echocardiography. This book begins with a detailed look at cardiac dissection, followed by accounts of light and electron microscopic studies of cellular components of the heart. The effects of haemodynamic forces on the heart and blood vessels are included and the changes that are associated with increasing age are fully discussed. Valve disease, an often neglected topic, is a useful feature of this book.

Modern views on the pathogenesis of atherosclerosis are fully reviewed. The subsequent chapters dealing with aortic disease and disorders of smaller vessels include the effects of therapeutic interventions. This fulfills the aim of the authors to present a clinico pathological view of cardiovascular pathology. Controversial issues such as the pathogenesis of aortic dissection and Buerger’s disease are fully discussed.

It is inevitable in a multiauthored book that there will be repetition of material. This occurs in the discussion of coronary artery disease and especially the sections on coronary atherosclerosis and myocardial ischaemia.

Myocarditis and the cardiomyopathies are described comprehensively. Recently discussed entities are included and are treated critically. The first volume ends with an account of disorders of the pericardium.

The second volume has a strong clinical emphasis and should appeal to pathologists who endeavour to make clinicopathological correlations in cardiovascular disease. The chapter on endocarditis deals with established knowledge and includes the problems of prosthetic valves, drug addiction, and other more recently recognised disorders. Subsequent chapters on valvar disorders relate pathological changes to haemodynamic disorders that they produce. The pathology of cardiovascular disease on the nervous system is an interesting addition to a book of this sort. Metabolic diseases, collagen diseases, and the effects of endocrine disorders on the cardiovascular system are described comprehensively. The bibliographies of these chapters are especially useful.

SEPARATE CHAP:ERS ON EFFECTS OF DRUGS AND PARASITIC DISORDERS are included and the effects of drugs on the cardiovascular system are described comprehensively. The bibliographies of these chapters are especially useful.

The book reviews


Prescribing doctors have a limited number of drug compendia to provide them with appropriate information. The British National Formulary is up-to-date, critical, and covers the range of licensed drugs. But its pocket-book format and the need for frequent revision mean that only a minimum of information is available on each drug listed. The ABPI Data Sheet Compendium has a couple of sides on each drug, but the information given is a hybrid of what is required by law and what the manufacturer chooses to include—with little critical assessment of the value of particular drugs in a particular situation. One can spend many hours browsing through Martinland’s Extra Pharmacopoeia, but its format is indigestible and it does not contain all the information a clinician might need.

The present work is a sort of clinician’s Martinland’s revised and divided, almost 3000 monographs on 700 odd drugs, selected for “originality, therapeutic value, extent of use or inclusion in the WHO list of essential drugs”. It is up-to-date enough to include recently licensed drugs such as sumatriptan or flergastrin. Each monograph follows the same pattern, covering all aspects from chemical structure and pharmacology to therapeutic use, patient selection, and the outcomes of clinical trials. This is an invaluable work for the clinician (including the clinical haematologist) and the pharmacist. At £265 for the two volumes, it is worth trying to persuade your pharmacy information service to buy it.

NP SLATTER


This volume documents in 496 pages the proceedings of the latest meeting of the International Association for Research on Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and associated diseases which took place in Taiwan, 1990. The meeting was attended by 183 persons who heard 63 papers; all the presentations are included in the form of short papers given a short review of the subject, the results of recent studies, and selected references which in many cases include publications of 1990. The papers cover the whole range of research on EBV and associated diseases: these are divided into epimucosal biology of EBV (20 papers); pathobiology (eight papers); immunobiology (nine papers); EBV and associated lymphoproliferative diseases (eight papers); advances in nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC) and clinical aspects of NPC (both of nine papers). The contributions are from laboratories all over the world including Europe, America, Canada, Australia, Africa and the Far East, and include papers from most of the best known and prestigious laboratories researching in this field. The 20 papers relating to the molecular biology of EBV bring us up to date with virus genes, transcription and translation products. The increasingly important role of EBV, especially in the field of immunology, and the role of cytokines in cell growth, is acknowledged in each paper. This book is an important and even essential resource for specialist workers in this field, an important laboratory volume for virologists, immunologists and oncologists, and would be a valuable addition to research institutions and medical libraries. It will remain a definitive resource on EBV until the Association meets again.

CW POTTER

Congratualtions to Mehregan and Hashimoto for the fifth edition of Pinkus’ Guide to Dermatohistopathology, five years after the previous edition. Dermatohistopathology continues to be one of the fastest growing branches of histopathology with an incredible volume of good research articles in an expanding number of dermatology and dermatopathology journals. Coping with this increasing research activity is not easy, and to compile a good and up to date bibliographic is a daunting prospect. Mehregan and Hashimoto have done just that in this edition.

This book over the years has moved from being just a bench book aimed at helping dermatopathologists and histopathologists through the difficult problems of histologic diagnosis to becoming, in addition, a good reference text and in this area compares favourably with the other standard textbooks.