

Book reviews

All titles reviewed here are available from the BMJ Bookshop, PO Box 295, London WC1H 9TE. Prices include postage in the United Kingdom and for members of the British Forces Overseas, but overseas customers should add £2 per item for postage and packing. Payment can be made by cheque in sterling drawn on a United Kingdom bank, or by credit card (Mastercard, VISA or American Express) stating card number, expiry date, and your full name.

A Handbook of Mortuary Practice and Safety for Anatomical Pathology Technicians. (Pp 90; £4.20 plus postage & packing). The Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene. 1992. ISBN 0-9514655-1-1.

This is a good little book and priced so that you should buy one for each of your anatomical pathology technicians. If anything lets it down, it is the section on chemical hazards which is not so practically orientated as the rest of the book. Furthermore, it lapses badly into COSHHese: for example, the reader is expected to know what TWA stands for (it is not explained). In a random survey carried out in our hospital five out of five histopathologists and nine out of 10 MLSOs thought it stood for Trans World Airlines and had never heard of Time Weighted Averages.

AC HUNT

Medical Microbiology. 14th ed. Ed D Greenwood, R Slack, J Peutherer. (Pp 850; Illustrations 278; £24.95). Churchill Livingstone. 1992. ISBN 0-443-04256-X.

This is yet another text book emanating from the Nottingham stable of medical microbiology. What began as "Mackie and McCartney", originally published in 1925, progressed to a two-part 12th edition in the 1970s where Part I was devoted to the concept of medical microbiology and its complex association with disease. Part II concentrated on the laboratory aspects of medical microbiology. This volume represents the latest part I production, with 50 different contributors (48 from the United Kingdom and two from the United States), and 68 different chapters. The chapters are divided into six sections: microbial biology; infection and immunity; bacterial pathogens and associated diseases; viral pathogens and associated diseases; fungal pathogens and parasitic infections (both protozoa and helminths) and finally diagnosis, treatment, and control of infection. The book is well written and the text and illustrations easy on the eye. The editors are to be congratulated on getting 50 different authors, and their associated different pecadillos, to the market place. It has must to commend it to both medical students and trainee medical microbiologists alike. However, its price may deter many students from purchasing it, but as the old adage says, "You get what you pay for".

RC SPENCER

Clinical and Experimental Toxicology of Organophosphates and Carbamates. B Ballantyne, TC Marrs. (Pp 641; £170). Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd. 1992.

Acetylcholine and the cholinesterases, and methods and consequences of their antagonism, inhibition, and reactivation underpin much of the history of pharmacology, pharmacogenetics, the pesticide industry, and chemical warfare, as well as being involved in tens (United Kingdom) to thousands (South East Asia) of poisonings each year. There should be no doubt about the scientific importance of the theme of this weighty monograph.

The contents cover, in turn, the basic science, neurotoxicity, other forms of toxicity, exposure at work and in the field, protection and monitoring, clinical features and treatment. Each section comprises several chapters which give proper weight to clinical disorders and their treatment, biochemical features, including diagnostic methods, pathology and occupational exposure, as well as more basic information about enzyme inhibition and activation, and environmental and experimental toxicology. Suitably mingled is much about almost all the OP and carbamate pesticides now in use in industry and in the clinic.

The editors have skilfully controlled a very large set of expert authors to produce a comprehensive, practical, and very useful book, which will be of value to the laboratory and clinical scientist in hospitals and in the field, as well as providing plenty of material for researchers and students. It should be bought as that unusual combination—a readable reference source and practically useful though specialised book.

AD DAYALL

Chemistry and Biology of N-nitroso Compounds. Cambridge Monographs on Cancer Research. W Lijinsky. (Pp 464; \$95). Cambridge University Press. 1992. ISBN 0-521-34629-0.

This book is one of a series. Dr Lijinsky has produced a comprehensive tome covering virtually all aspects of the chemistry, including analytical chemistry, of the *N*-nitroso compounds. Anyone with an interest in either organic chemistry or cancer would benefit from dipping into this book. However, I have to say that the practical clinical pathologist who wishes to restrict his reading to matter directly connected to his work would find little of relevance to day to day practice in this book. Examination candidates concerned about questions on carcinogenesis should read chapter 2 which is a useful synopsis on the occurrence, formation, and detection of *N*-nitroso compounds. The main readership will be professional toxicologists, those working for regulatory agencies and experimental pathologists. I do not see this book, excellent though it is, forming part of the library of the working clinical pathologist in any discipline.

ARW FORREST

Bladder Biopsy Interpretation. Biopsy Interpretation Series. Lucien E Nochomovitz. (Pp 239; \$99.00.) Raven Press. 1992. ISBN 0-88167-878-3.

This is a companion volume to Jonathan Epstein's excellent *Prostatic Biopsy*

Interpretation of the same series and compares favourably. The layout of material covered is conventional: proliferative and metaplastic conditions, inflammations, and tumours, benign and malignant, epithelial and non-epithelial but is none the worse for that. There is also a short introductory chapter written in conjunction with a urologist which addresses the indications and methods of bladder biopsy, technical methods used, and the wording of reports. I agree that pathologists should be fully conversant with clinical practice, but much of this chapter is rather simplistic and pedantic (a further plea for more information on request forms) and is out of place in a specialised text.

Text and illustrations are, on the whole, excellent and there is a full and up-to-date bibliography. My only criticism is of a certain lack of balance which appears to reflect the author's interests—or those of his pupils.

Schistosomiasis is an important cause of urological problems worldwide but I doubt whether it generates many problems of bladder biopsy interpretation and I am quite sure that this is NOT the text in which to describe the life cycle of this organism; this description must also have bored the author and/or proof reader as one sentence is repeated on successive pages (44 and 45). Similarly, a detailed discussion of the biochemistry of ABO blood groups in relation to prognosis of bladder cancer is misplaced, especially as the technique has never really established itself in clinical practice.

Elsewhere, there is much to admire: the common confusion between cystitis cystica and cystitis glandularis is discussed as is the problematical concept of papilloma. Other statements are more contentious. I am not convinced that all longstanding metaplastic conditions are the forerunner of the corresponding carcinoma and I had also not come across the term "mixed transitional cell carcinoma" for those tumours with conspicuous glandular or squamous differentiation—no reference is given for this term.

Initially, I had been dismayed to see the length of the list of acknowledgments for material used in this book, expecting the author of a book of this nature to have seen and reported most of the conditions discussed. However, this concern was soon dispelled on reading the volume and with the few caveats mentioned above I am happy to recommend it and to have it on my book shelf for reference and day-to-day use. With its ample illustrations and numerous references it is probably the most useful text on bladder pathology currently available for day-to-day diagnostic work.

ID ANSELL

Greenfield's Neuropathology. 5th edn. Ed J Hume Adams, LW Duchon. (Pp 1557; £45.) Edward Arnold. 1992. ISBN 0-340-54629-8

This useful fifth edition will be widely read. The index is exhaustive and the references, if not up to 1992, are ample. There are now 27 expert contributors—two of them the editors—including one of the best, Oppenheimer, who died recently. The book, apart from anything else, reflects the development of neuropathology. The only principal subject that is missing is tumours.