

Book reviews

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Guidelines for Quality Assurance Programmes for Blood Transfusion Services. (Pp 50; soft cover Sw Fr 12) World Health Organization. 1993. ISBN 92-4-1544481.

This new WHO publication deals with the important subject of quality assurance in blood transfusion practice for both transfusion centres and hospitals.

This short manual is clearly and concisely written. It outlines the systematic application of quality assurance measures to all aspects of blood transfusion practice from the collection of blood from the donor to transfusion of the right component to the right patient. It also emphasises the importance of staff training, effective management, and audit.

This is a consensus opinion of experts and provides authoritative information and guidance. The publication could have been improved by including the names of the contributors.

AH WATERS

The Skin. Vol 9. Systemic Pathology. 3rd edn. Ed D Weedon. Series Editor W StC Symmers. (Pp 1100; 634 illustrations; £155.) Churchill Livingstone. 1992. ISBN 0-443-03201-7.

Not so long ago you had a copy of "Lever" for the skin biopsies and that was it. Over the past few years we have seen several good books of skin pathology appear, each differing in style and extent, ranging from McKee's large full colour text to my own "core curriculum" book of manageable size. Lever is sadly no longer with us so who will replace him?

In the second edition of "Symmers" the skin was presented as a large chapter developed from Milne's small text beloved of trainees 20 years ago. Now in the third edition David Weedon has produced a much expanded contribution, with 40 chapters.

The book is very good. Wallpaper matching has been facilitated by grouping conditions according to their "reaction pattern": conditions that look similar but have different causes are described together. This approach is very advantageous. The problem with "Lever" was that you had to know the answer before you could look it up. Here, you have a good chance of finding the correct differential diagnosis if you can iden-

tify the basic type of process.

The book is large but has managed to maintain a reasonably uniform standard throughout. The chapters are organised in a logical order. Most of the figures are good, although some appear a little small where they have been fitted into the double column format of the pages. The emphasis is on pathology, with no clinical pictures included. Plentiful references are given, extending up to 1990 in most chapters. So is this the new "Lever"? Quite possibly. It is certainly a very well produced and comprehensive text that should find a place in all histopathology departments.

N KIRKHAM

The Light Microscope. Its Use and Development. WG Hartley. (Pp 360; £40.) Senecio Publishing Company. 1993. ISBN 0-906831-05-9.

The author of this volume is a scholar and well known to the microscope community in England. He approaches his subject from the point of view of the instrument and all its components in all possible modes of construction and use, rather than from the point of view of the user in any specific area.

I have the impression that the book is written for the author rather than for the reader, but it will, nevertheless, be read with considerable interest by anyone who understands the true value of historical research. If it is even marginally true that everything has been done before, that most discoveries are rediscoveries, and that human behaviour is rather repetitious, then please read this book to obtain some good hints on how to do better with your own area of microscopic investigation.

This volume will definitely not be of interest to anyone who simply looks down a routine microscope purchased as a package from a modern manufacturer for routine examination of specimens which, for all that each comes from a biologically unique individual, are much the same.

Much of the material is repetitious—interesting for showing that the current vogue for multi-author volumes does not actually demand more than one author. The degree of repetition is such that individual chapters can be delved into without missing reference to some of the authors' favourite themes, among which we can detect strong opinions regarding the inevitability of the decline and collapse of the British microscope manufacturing industry. More importantly, we are continuously reminded of the utility of oblique illumination in improving visibility and resolution. It used to be easy to achieve oblique illumination in standard monocular microscopes, but this is difficult with modern binocular heads and condenser arrangements. A recent microscope design has achieved the same and it will be interesting to see how it is accepted.

Other important, take-home messages in this volume are that resolution is nothing like so important as the ability to scan large amounts of material. Central, perfect resolution is sacrificed in broad, flat-field designs, but surveying possibilities are dramatically increased: this is what matters to the routine user. For anyone going beyond routine use, understanding the function of the microscope is indispensable and this volume will be welcome as an introduction to historical research in the field. It is only a

pity that the style of references is more akin to that used by classical historians than to the modern scientific style.

ALAN BOYDE

Comparative Primate Pathology. GBD Scott. (Pp 288; £65.) Oxford University Press 1992. ISBN 0-19-857640-4.

This book encapsulates the interest of a medically trained morbid anatomist in the pathology of non-human primates. The monograph is described as a comparison of the pathologies of primates and humans, and is largely based on the author's personal review of accessioned pathology material from zoological collections in the UK and USA, and from the Yerkes Primate Center in Atlanta.

The first chapter is a personal statement on the nature and value of comparative pathology. I think there is much in this chapter that is contentious to veterinary pathologists: the lack of recognition of ante-mortem investigation of domesticated and exotic animals does less than justice to the improvements that have taken place in veterinary clinical pathology, particularly as practised in North America. The other early chapters, on zoological aspects of primatology, growth and development, and ageing, are useful introductions to these topics.

The main part of the book deals with general and systemic pathology, primarily from the perspective of human disease, with additional information provided for primate lesions reviewed by the author, or quoted from other publications. A valuable feature of this book is the reference to necropsy numbers that should permit easy access to the data recorded by the original veterinary pathologist. The author's thoroughness in this detail is not always matched by accuracy in personal and institutional attributions.

How valuable is this book, and how well does it meet the author's aspiration to form "a comprehensive, balanced review of the pathology of simian primates . . ."? For the veterinary pathologist developing an interest in primate pathology, this book will provide part of a useful introduction to what is (or was) common in primates kept in zoological collections. The treatment of general pathology is necessarily brief in such a short publication and the critical pathologist (both veterinary and medical) will find more satisfactory written and photographic material in standard text books. Pathologists working with primates as experimental animals in biomedical research will need broader and deeper sources of published and unpublished information than is included here.

This monograph deserves recognition as the labour of love of a pathologist with a broadly based interest in disease across several primate species. The late Professor Scott's collection of observations will be useful to a range of workers concerned with disease of those related, but different, species. The enthusiasm of the author makes the book an enjoyable piece of reading for any pathologist with an interest in more than one species.

DF KELLY

Atlas of Endometriosis. Ed Dan C Martin. (Price: £40.00.) Gower Medical Publishing. 1993. ISBN 1-56375-547-5.