

## Book reviews

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**Histology Picture Tests.** Alan Stevens, James Lowe. (Pp 144; 215 illustrations; \$1995.) Raven Press. 1992. ISBN 1-56375-532-7.

This slim paperback is intended to be a companion to the recently published textbook of histology by the same authors. The book is organised as a series of photographs or diagrams with questions beneath relating to labels mounted on the pictures. Answers are given at the back with page references to *Histology*, from which many of the illustrations have been drawn. This is a useful approach which has much to recommend it, although using different illustrations of the same structures would provide more of a test.

While the book is in general well produced, some of the photographs are not as good as they could be. If the stains are haematoxylin and eosin, why are the nuclei pink in many of the illustrations? This deficiency is likely to cause confusion and should be improved for the next edition. There are one or two problems with labels—the black lines used do not show up well on the otherwise excellent electron micrographs. Both the 2 and 3 dimensional diagrams are good.

Although priced at \$19.95 in the USA and Canada, in the United Kingdom this book costs £12.95. This seems a bit expensive for a small book that will probably be used once by most students—perhaps it is more suited to libraries. But, it should be useful to anyone who has the Gower histology text and wishes to test their histological skills.

IA CREE

**Antibiotics and Chemotherapy.** 6th edn. HP Lambert, FW O'Grady. (Pp 561; £60.) Churchill Livingstone. 1991. ISBN 0-443-03203-3.

This book has been eagerly awaited since publication of the last edition in 1981. Its previous logical division into two sections has been maintained. The first part is a detailed consideration of the major classes of chemotherapeutic agents; the second gives an account of antimicrobial aspects of the management of infection. Here the similarity to previous editions ends.

The major part of the book has been written by Professors Lambert and O'Grady. Their vast experience is complemented, however, by contributions from a variety of specialists, in microbiology, communicable disease control, mycology, infectious disease, intensive care, renal medicine and ophthalmology. Contributors have been drawn predominantly from the UK but include two from the USA and one from Australia.

In the first part, the main characteristics of each chemically distinct group of antimicrobial agents are separately addressed and sections are arranged in alphabetical order. Selected references are included. Following the section on each compound, there is an informative and up to date summary of preparations and dosages.

In the second part useful new chapters include those on antimicrobial treatment in the immunocompromised host and chemoprophylaxis. There are also expanded sections on antibiotics and renal failure, and on antibiotic management of infections of the eye. Key references from the past 122 years are included here. Inevitably, as with all publications of this type, the time involved in manuscript preparation results in a lack of inclusion of the most recent papers.

The layout of the book is impressively clear. The text is easily readable. It contains a vast amount of information which will appeal to microbiologists, clinicians, and pharmacists alike. At £60 it is a good investment and was certainly worth waiting for.

HELEN HOLZEL

**Tumors and Tumorlike Lesions of Soft Tissue.** Ed V Ninfo, EB Chung, AO Cavazzana. Contemporary Issues in Surgical Pathology—17. (Pp 295; £60.) Churchill Livingstone. 1991. ISBN 0-443-08672-9.

It was with some excitement that I started to read this multiauthor book and although my enthusiasm waned part of the way through, some of the later chapters revived it. This book tries to cover all aspects of soft tissue tumours and tumourlike lesions and covers the diagnostic features as well as the immunohistochemistry, cytogenetics and electron microscopy. Each chapter discusses the soft tissue conditions normally allocated to a specific tissue type such as tumours of adipose tissue, tumours of muscle tissue, tumours of synovial tissue, etc. Interestingly, although there is a chapter on mesothelioma, and there is a discussion of PNET of bone, there is no chapter on bone and cartilage tumours of soft tissues.

Despite its attempt to be a comprehensive gazette of soft tissue tumours, it has left out some of the newer tumours and tumourlike lesions and discusses other important conditions rather too briefly. Conversely, it has devoted a short, complete chapter to clear cell sarcoma. The chapters vary in the depth of discussion and also in the number of references. Some chapters have been well referenced and the authors have carefully chosen their list. However, other chapters contain numerous references and this makes it difficult to separate the really important ones from those that are not much better than a case report. The layout and size of the illustrations is sometimes a little idiosyncratic and the quality of the photomicrographs varies from excellent to

being dull and poorly illuminated. I think the authors missed an ideal opportunity to be more selective and cover those more controversial areas and newer entities which more standard texts on soft tissue tumours cover poorly. In particular, the controversy over the diagnosis of pleomorphic malignant fibrous histiocytoma was discussed too briefly and indeed the variants of malignant fibrous histiocytoma could have been dealt with more fully.

However, this book does have its gems within some of the chapters. The text and illustrations in the chapter on tumour and tumourlike lesions of blood vessels are very good and the chapter on tumours and tumourlike conditions of the peripheral nerve is excellent. Overall, my impression is that although the book has some recommendations it falls between the major texts on diagnostic aspects of soft tissue tumours and other texts on the pathobiology and recent advances of such sarcomas.

J MALCOLM

**Diagnostic Immunology.** DF Keren, JS Warren. (Pp 402; £69.) Williams & Wilkins. 1992. ISBN 0 683 04596 2.

This new volume on diagnostic immunology by two experienced authors attempts to fill the gap between texts on basic and clinical immunology on the one hand and laboratory manuals on the other; it is aimed at laboratory staff, clinicians and students. I agree with the authors that there is a need for texts at this level, but it is a difficult niche to fill: they have succeeded admirably. The book is in three parts: an exposition of the basic principles of immunology, building up concepts from simple beginnings and with a nice historical flavour; an outline of the main immunopathological processes, both in general and in relation to specific disorders; and an outline of how the first is applied to the pursuit of the second in laboratory diagnosis.

The basic immunology is gently introduced, with a good sense of the wider picture always kept in view. It carefully eschews the temptation to go off into realms of detail and/or theory. A broad canvas is built up without the usually evident seams and the key elements are woven into a straightforward fabric of the immune response and an elegant description of the inflammatory process. Inevitably some of the latest views on antigen processing and presentation and on the T cell receptor complex are excluded, but this does not detract. The immunopathology is kept simple and is even minimalist in places; while some of the detail one hopes to find on one's favourite topics is missing, the key features are all there, with nice insights. Again the temptation to be discursive is avoided and the net result is a clear perspective. The diagnostic approach is well introduced with a good section on what the laboratory can and cannot do and how best to use it. It is followed by another nicely judged sketch of the laboratory diagnostic repertoire, with plenty of practical hints.

While one may carp at minor infelicities in areas one knows well, the overall result is always relevant and accurate at a certain level. As an introduction I suspect it will be of most use to staff in clinical laboratories, who would do well to read it at an early stage and have their own copy for reference. Clinical students may find it a useful