

IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans. Vol 59. Hepatitis Viruses. (Pp 286; Sw.fr 65.) World Health Organisation. 1994. ISBN 92-832-1259-2.

Viral hepatitis in all its forms is a major public health problem throughout the world, affecting several hundreds of millions of people. Viral hepatitis is a cause of considerable morbidity and mortality both from acute infection and chronic sequelae which include, in the case of hepatitis B, C and D, chronic active hepatitis and cirrhosis. Hepatocellular carcinoma, which is one of the 10 commonest cancers worldwide, is closely associated with hepatitis B and, at least in some regions of the world, with hepatitis C virus.

This timely monograph is a distillation of knowledge of hepatitis B, C and D, based on a review of 1000 studies by a small group of scientists. (It is interesting to note in passing that some 5000 papers on viral hepatitis are published annually in the world literature.)

The epidemiological, clinical and experimental data on the association between infection with hepatitis B virus and primary liver cancer in humans are reviewed in a readable and succinct format. The available information on hepatitis C and progression to chronic infection is also evaluated and it is concluded (perhaps a little prematurely) that hepatitis C virus is carcinogenic. However, it is concluded that hepatitis D virus, an unusual virus with a number of similarities to certain plant viral satellites and viroids, cannot be classified as a human carcinogen.

There are some minor criticisms: there are few illustrations and some complex tabulations (for example, Table 6) and no subject index. A cumulative cross index to IARC Monographs is of little value and occupies nearly 30 pages.

This small volume is a useful addition to the overwhelming literature on viral hepatitis, and the presentation is similar to the excellent World Health Organisation Technical Reports series on the subject published in the past. It is strongly recommended as a readable up-to-date summary of a complex subject; and at a cost of 65 Sw.fr (approximately £34) is excellent value.

A J ZUCKERMAN

Common Problems in Pediatric Pathology. Vijay V Joshi. (Pp 524; £125.00.) IgakuShoin Medical Publishers Inc. 1994. ISBN 0-89640-242-8.

This book is comprised of 13 chapters, each covering a different topic in paediatric or perinatal pathology. These are derived from a series of short courses given by the author to the American Society of Clinical Pathologists and the book is aimed at trainees in both paediatric and general pathology. The author recognises that paediatric pathology is a rapidly expanding field and, on a day-to-day basis, many paediatric problems are dealt with by general physicians whose training in this specific area may be deficient.

The topics, which include necropsy in the fetus and newborn, paediatric tumours, AIDS in childhood, aspects of paediatric pulmonary anomalies, respiratory distress syndrome, perinatal central nervous system lesions, and Hirschsprung's disease, are well chosen and the author provides a useful approach and much good advice based on his own wide

experience. Some chapters, such as that on Hirschsprung's disease, are particularly well written and address significant problems of interpretation in a very practical fashion. The illustrations are generally well chosen, but are often disappointingly dark and lacking in resolution.

This book provides a useful introduction to paediatric pathology and gathers together a variety of important issues in one digestible volume, although it would not in itself be sufficient to cover all aspects of the subject even for a non-specialist. It would be a welcome addition to any histopathology departmental library, particularly one providing training for the MRCPATH.

R A RISDON

Color Atlas of Gross Placental Pathology. Cynthia G Kaplan. (Pp 116; £98.00.) Igaku-Shoin Medical Publishers Inc. 1994. ISBN 0-89640-249-5.

This small slim volume of just over 100 pages illustrates, in a series of glorious colour photographs, the major features detectable in single and twin placentas on naked eye examination. The book also includes an account of the author's approach to examination of the placenta and occasional black and white photomicrographs and diagrams. The main text is divided into six chapters dealing with examination procedures, placental development, umbilical cord, fetal membranes, villous tissue, and multiple gestation. In each, the major variables and lesions are illustrated and briefly described, and their significance is commented upon. No references are given in the text itself, even for contentious issues, but a useful general list is provided at the end of the volume. Examples of macroscopical reports and charts of normal placental physical measurements are given in a series of appendices.

The information in this book is covered in standard placental pathology texts and chapters, and I do not feel it would be of great value to those experienced in looking at placentas. However, by taking a limited subject and presenting the major features in a concise and highly attractive way which is easy to absorb, it would be a great help to trainees of all disciplines about to embark on placental examination. For histopathologists, more microscopy might have been an advantage. The major problem with this publication is its cost. With many contenders for ever shrinking funds, investment of nearly £100 to cover a very limited area of pathology will be deemed excessive by most departments.

I JEFFREY

Image Analysis: A Primer for Pathologists. Marchevsky AM, Bartels PH, eds. (Pp 368; \$123.50.) Raven Press. 1994. ISBN 0 7817 0170 8.

Image analysis has long been a research interest of many pathologists and the advent of video cameras linked to powerful microcomputers has produced powerful tools for quantitation. This 360 page multi-author book provides a useful overview of the field with large amounts of methodological detail. The chapters on the video photometer, scene segmentation and principles of stereology are especially well written and any researcher contemplating using an image analysis system would benefit from reading these before switching on any equipment. The references

are comprehensive and up-to-date with some 1993 papers cited and new techniques, such as fractal geometry and neural network analysis, are mentioned. In later chapters the disadvantage of multi-authorship and lenient editing are revealed with considerable overlap between the chapters on "Morphometry in Pathology" and "Principles of Stereology", and "Microphotometry in Pathology" and "Quantitative Immunocytochemistry in Pathology". The chapter on data analysis contains a good text description of multivariate analysis but this would have been improved by some graphical representations of data set examples. That this is a book which will be primarily of use in research is illustrated by the mere 18 lines which are devoted to the current applications of morphometric techniques in the pathology laboratory. The book retails at \$123.50 which is probably reasonable for a glossy-paged hardback with a limited market, but it has strong competition from Professor Baak's more expensive, but more comprehensive, book covering a similar area (*Manual of Quantitative Pathology in Cancer Diagnosis and Prognosis*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1991).

S S CROSS

Benign to Malignant Progression in Cervical Squamous Epithelium. Robert L Ehrmann. (Pp 256; £94.) Igaku-Shoin. 1994. ISBN 0-89640-241-X.

The title of this book may lead the reader to expect an account of the mechanisms involved in the development of malignancy, and perhaps also invasion, in the cervix. Alas, he would be disappointed, as it is no more than an account of the histological and cytological features of cervical epithelium and its abnormalities. The only "progression" involved is in the layout of the chapters, which starts with normal appearances and physiological changes, continues with chapters on intra-epithelial precursors, on human papilloma virus and on early stroma invasion, and progresses to two chapters on invasive squamous cell carcinoma and adenocarcinoma. The coverage in most sections is adequate, but is a little superficial in some and, although this is clearly a personal view based on Dr Ehrmann's extensive experience, most important up-to-date references are included. Here and there one could question some statements, such as the assertions that cervical columnar epithelium cannot regenerate and that squamous metaplasia is a response to inflammation. The emphasis of the book is on diagnostic criteria and pitfalls and the sections listing the diagnostic pitfalls are especially useful. There is a final chapter on problems with biopsy specimens and smears. An unusual feature of the layout is that the figures are all gathered at the end of the chapters. This has the advantage that the text is not broken up but there is difficulty in the continual leafing forwards and backwards that is necessary when referring to the figures while reading the text. The figures themselves are plentiful, although some are rather dark. There are six colour photomicrographs. The book is written in an easy-to-read style and each chapter carries a summary. It is difficult to see to whom this book is directed; the cytology component is not sufficiently detailed for use in an active cytology department and the histopathology is little more than is available in current text books on gynaecological pathology. The numerous illus-