Book reviews

Oppenheimer's Diagnostic Neuropathology: A Practical Manual. 2nd edn. Esiri MM. (£125.00.) Blackwell Science. 1996. ISBN 0865429154.

The second edition of this title differs in several important respects from its predecessor, most obviously in the widespread use of colour for both macroscopic and microscopic illustrations. The illustrations have also been expanded by the use of magnetic resonance images (MRI); these are used to particularly good effect in the correlation between anatomy in the fixed brain and MRI brain "slices". The title has been modified to incorporate the name of one of the previous authors who is now deceased but made a lasting contribution to British neuropathology during his distinguished career. The strength of this book lies in the invaluable practical guidance given on all aspects of diagnostic neuropathology, ranging from necropsy techniques, selection of tissues at necropsy, brain inspection and dissection, block selection, staining techniques, and histological interpretation and diagnosis. The text is remarkably comprehensive and is supplemented by useful additional reading lists and by reference to current practical guidelines—for example, for "high risk" necropsy cases. The chapters are arranged in a problem-orientated manner which facilitates use of this book as a diagnostic aid. The use of colour illustrations brings a much greater sense of immediacy to the macroscopic and microscopic images and although not all the colour reproductions are equally successful (some microscopic images are poorly balanced or shaded), the majority are entirely successful. I was pleased to see that the various shorter sections which set this book apart from its predecessor have been retained, in particular the final two chapters on "Associated Malfunctions" which serves as a very useful starting point for the investigation of complex or obscure clinical syndromes, and "Other Matters", the final chapter in which paternal advice is given on relations with clinicians and other pathologists (sometimes a cause of concern for neuropathologists!) and the role of the neuropathologist is discussed.

This well-produced book is a joy for both trainees and experienced neuropathologists to use and everyone I know who purchased the previous edition has kept it close to their working bench. The improved presentation and slightly expanded scope of the second edition justify its production and I would recommend this book not only to neuropathologists but to all pathologists who have to deal with any aspects of diseases involving the nervous system.

J IRONSIDE

Basic Analytical Toxicology. Flanagan R, Braithwaite R, Brown S, Widdop B, de Wolff F. (Pp 275; US\$54.00.) World Health Organisation Publications. 1995. ISBN 92 4 154458 9.

This book presents a challenge to all analytical toxicologists and not just to those in developing countries for which it is intended. Simple techniques are described

which need the minimum of specialist equipment that is not always dependent on electricity. Weighing scales and centrifuges are manual, shakers hand driven, test tubes man-sized with eye catching, coloured contents, and everybody will need a Conway spotting plate. In all, a delightful and nostalgic reminder of my school chemistry days in the Lake District. Every toxicological analyst whether practising, quality controlling or prospective should have a copy. Somebody one day might just sneak those techniques into a (electricity free) practical examination!

The book is very easy to use and readable. Practical aspects are covered in the first five chapters. Chapter 6 contains more specific analytical methods for over 100 substances commonly involved in acute toxic incidents. The bibliography, laid out under functional headings, typifies the thought put into helping the user. Other examples are the glossary, compound and reagent reference lists and conversion factors for mass and molar units. General clinical symptoms with suggested reporting forms are provided. The summary of the suggested analytical scheme on p58 justifies a more prominent place as it links many techniques. This apart, it is an excellent manual well suited for its purpose of basic analytical toxicology.

B RUSHTON

General and Systematic Pathology. 2nd edn. Underwood JCE, ed. (Pp 944; £35.00.) Churchill Livingstone. 1996. ISBN 0443052824.

The first edition of this book was published in 1992 and quickly became a best-seller in pathology circles and medical schools. It is very popular with teachers and students. A walk down the main corridor in my department confirms that it is widely used by those of us who teach undergraduates in the health care professions. In terms of presentation and style, it was the forerunner of the shaded box and simple line drawings that are now obligatory in all self respecting undergraduate texts. The popularity of *General and Systematic Pathology* as a pathology text is not surprising as it is written with clarity, in a uniform style that is a great tribute to the editor.

In the second edition, there is the same basic organisation into three main sections. The first covers the general nature and causes of disease, the second covers basic disease mechanisms and the third is essentially systemic pathology. The summary panel at the beginning of each section provides a context for the student as well as useful revision points. The clinical relevance of pathology as a subject is alluded to throughout, and there is a high degree of integration between the basic science and clinical signs, symptoms and practice.

The new edition has built on the success of the first and has also been extensively revised and updated. There are three new chapters that cover molecular and environmental causes of disease, diagnostic pathology in clinical practice and ageing and death. The latter, written by Dennis Cotton, is thought provoking and shows how philosophy and science go hand in hand. The editor is unusual in that he has taken account of the changing pace of undergraduate curricula not just in the UK but internationally as well.

I am pleased to have this new edition and have no doubts that it will remain a best-seller. I recommend it to all my students. Priced at £35.00 this book represents excel-

lent value for undergraduates and contains more than enough material to take them through to qualification and beyond.

C DUBOULAY

Case Studies in General and Systematic Pathology. Underwood JCE, Cotton DWK, Cross SS, Stephenson TJ. (Pp 178; £15.00.) Churchill Livingstone. 1996. ISBN 0443050961.

Some of the best things come in small packages and this slim volume of case studies is no exception. Between these covers is a treasure trove of material for students. There are 60 case studies that can be used by students on their own or in small groups with or without a tutor. They cover a wide range of topics that integrate pathology with other disciplines and with clinical medicine. The case scenario is set and then the student is presented with a series of questions. The explanations and answers are given in an adjacent shaded panel that can be covered and then revealed. Revision boxes at the end of each case refer the student to further reading.

Pathology is one of the core disciplines that informs clinical medicine. Students tend to learn best when they are stimulated and can see the relevance of their studies. Pathology learnt in isolation can be boring and tedious but it comes to life when presented in a clinical context. Add to this a format that encourages hypothesis testing, reasoning and problem solving and you have the perfect recipe for deep, effective learning.

This book is primarily designed as a companion to Underwood's *General and Systemic Pathology*. However, I think it may equally stand alone as resource material for students and teachers alike on which to base their learning and teaching. At £15.00, it is an essential buy for any student, regardless of whether or not their medical school has an integrated curriculum.

C DUBOULAY

Biopsy Pathology of the Oesophagus, Stomach and Duodenum. 2nd edn. Day DW, Dixon MF. (£100.00.) Chapman and Hall. 1995. ISBN 0 412 63570 4.

For me, Chapman and Hall's *Biopsy Pathology* series has been a little variable, particularly when using these books for pathological diagnosis. This title is unequivocally one of the very best ones. The second edition is much improved by the addition of the UK's top gastrointestinal pathologist, Dr Dixon, as a fellow author to the original single author, Dr Day. Together they have produced an excellent reference book to upper gastrointestinal tract pathology. How has the book changed since its first edition nine years ago? It has been enriched by some excellent additions, particularly on gastritis, gastric lymphoma, upper GI cytology, and AIDS pathology in the upper tract, the latter two by acknowledged experts in the field, Drs Hussain and Francis. The photography is excellent and there are many fine colour plates. Nine years ago, there was no mention of the word helicobacter and yet helicobacter related pathology is, obviously, a major part of this book. It is incredible to see the change that a single decade has wrought to upper gastrointestinal tract pathology.

The text is succinctly divided into sections on each of the three major organs except for unifying pathologies such as vascular lesions,