Basic Pharmacology

By R. W. FOSTER and B. COX. Pp. xvii+348, illustrated. Butterworths, London, 1980. £6.95.

This book contains all the information needed for most basic pharmacology courses in the United Kingdom. Its organization is different from that of other books on the subject. Most text books of pharmacology organise their subject matter in terms of the therapeutic uses of drugs; in this case, the authors have chosen to classify the drugs according to their sites of action (e.g. the peripheral nervous system, the central nervous system, the endocrine system, etc.). Such a classification enables the authors to preface each section with a very brief résumé of the physiology and anatomy of the system which enables them to emphasize the mechanism of action of the drugs. It also helps them to realize their 'principle of understanding first and foremost, memorization last and least'. The therapeutic uses of the drugs are dealt with in the last section of the book which 'brings together drugs from different sections and so hopefully counteracts compartmentalization of information'. The way in which the book is organized also has the effect of necessitating a good deal of cross-referencing to other pages and to tables and figures in other parts of the book. The pages are easy to find but not so the tables and figures which have chapter and number references. Perhaps, according to personality, the constant referral to other parts of the book may or may not be tiresome. All in all, the book is good value for money.

Cancer Risks by Site

Edited by T. HIRAYAMA, J. A. H. WATERHOUSE and J. F. FRAUMENI. UICC Technical Report Series—Vol. 41, pp. 217, illustrated. International Union Against Cancer, Geneva 1981. Sw. Fr. 20.00.

This book is based on a UICC international workshop held in Oslo in 1976 under the sponsorship of the Norwegian Cancer Society. It summarizes the epidemiological features of cancers of all sites in a systematic manner and comments on patterns of occurrence, host factors and environmental factors in no less than 38 different cancers. It is lavishly illustrated with graphs that enable the trends in incidence with time and sex to be determined and gives the male and female incidence per 100 000 population for each age group in 12 major registries.

This outstanding work of reference will be of great interest to all those who are concerned with the epidemiology of cancer. It provides essential baseline information which will enable the influence of environmental factors, for example smoking, to be studied throughout the world. The identification and monitoring of high risk groups is the basis for effective cancer prevention and this book will certainly make a valuable contribution to this aim.

A Colour Atlas of Nutritional Disorders

By DONALD S. MCLAREN. Pp. 109, illustrated. Wolfe Medical Publications, London, 1981. £15.00.

For many, the term nutritional disorders conveys an image of deficiency states rarely encountered in the developed countries. The author, who was formerly Professor of Clinical Nutrition in the American University of Beirut, quite rightly projects a much broader and more comprehensive concept to include the sequelae of excessive intakes, toxicity from substances normally regarded as essential and the growing list of metabolic disorders which respond to dietary management. The book is the latest addition to the series of Wolfe Medical Atlases, and contains 288 ilustrations, the majority of which are in colour. The figures are predominantly clinical photographs but radiographs and photomicrographs are included where appropriate. Each of the figures is accompanied by a succinct explanatory paragraph. The first 4 sections relate to protein growth malnutrition, vitamins, fluid and electrolyte disorders, and the dietary-responsive metabolic disorders, ranging from obesity to maple syrup urine disease. The remaining sections on food toxins and diseases of uncertain aetiology, although fascinating and beautifully illustrated, do perhaps strain the definition of the term nutritional disorder. There is no doubt that this Atlas fills a long-standing gap in the literature and will provide a valuable supplement which will enhance and illuminate the standard texts of medicine, paediatrics and nutrition. It is particularly commended to those who may be contemplating health care work in the developing countries.

Haemophili in Medical Literature 1883–1978; an Indexed Bibliography of More Than 1200 References

Compiled by D. C. TURK. Pp. 96. Hodder and Stoughton, London, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto. £6.50. (Paperback)

Ever since their discovery nearly 100 years ago, controversy has surrounded the pleomorphic and nutritionally fastidious bacteria now classified in the *Haemophilus* genus. Beginning in 1883 with Robert Koch's isolation of the eponymous 'Koch-Weeks bacillus' from a heterogeneous group of Egyptian eye infections including trachoma, confusion reached its peak after 1892 when Richard Pfeiffer discovered his 'influenza bacillus'. With this error perpetuated in the title *Haemophilus influenzae*, argument has continued to rage about the role of the bacillus in adult respiratory infection. However, as its one act of benevolence, the bacillus was the basis for Fleming's crucial 1929 paper on penicillin which he reported as a selective agent for the organism. These and many other colourful events are embedded inconspicuously in Dr Turk's sober bibliographical compilation.

Understandably, but to the reviewer's disappointment, references to one of the most controversial of all bacteria—'*Haemophilus*' *vaginalis*—have been omitted, as have those to a former member of the *Haemophilus* genus *Bordetella pertussis*; but surely *Haemophilus ducreyi* should have been included. This little book, however, performs its allotted task well, and supplies the human intelligence lacking in a mere computer print-out. Clinical microbiologists, respiratory physicians and paediatricians will find it a useful key to 95 years of the literature.

Immunosuppressive Therapy

Edited by J. R. SALAMAN. Current Status of Modern Therapy, Vol. 7. Pp. xi+257, illustrated. MTP Press, Lancaster, 1981. £16.95.

The book is divided into 2 sections; the first includes an introduction to agents presently used in the immunosuppression, their properties, and a short summary on their mode of action in relation to the cell cycle. The chapter on radiation explains the concept of variable radiosensitivity and differential cell-kill on cell populations, and the use of this in relation to manipulating the immune response in clinical situations of organ transplantation, autoimmunity and neoplasia. The first half also includes a chapter on the clinical results for transplant using antilymphocyte globulin and thoracic duct drainage, an excellent chapter on cyclosporin A including its *in vitro* and *in vivo* properties in humoral and cell-mediated immunity, in relation to organ grafting and a final chapter on the principles of immunosuppression in the field of human organ transplantation.

The second half contains individual chapters discussing the management results and complication of cardiac, renal