Books received

Palliative Care: the Management of Far-Advanced Illness. Edited by DEREK DOYLE. Pp. vii + 536, illustrated. Croom Helm, London, Canberra, The Charles Press, Philadelphia, 1984. £25.00.

Saunders Dictionary and Encyclopedia of Laboratory Medicine and Technology. Edited by JAMES L. BENNINGTON. Pp. xix + 1674, illustrated. W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia, London, Toronto, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney, Tokyo, 1984. £40.00.

Book reviews

Annual Review of Immunology Vol. 1

Edited by W. E. PAUL, C. G. FATHMAN and H. METZGER. Pp. 666, illustrated. Annual Reviews Inc., Palo Alto, California, 1983. \$30.00.

In an increasingly complicated and diverse science such as immunology, there is a great need for good 'state of the art' reviews. This new entry to the Annual Review series is one which will be welcomed by immunologists in all areas of the discipline, for it is to the research immunologist that this book is directed. It is of little value to the clinician, unless he/she has a highly sophisticated knowledge of the subject and even then as much of the material is mouse orientated, those concerned with human immunology must hope for enlightenment in future editions.

The book begins with an excellent chapter by Elvin Kabat, describing how he began research 50 years ago and outlines his career for the first 21 years. The financial strictures of today are considerably easier to cope with than the political ones he endured during the McCarthy era. Among other chapters in the book are highly detailed reviews in which immunological tolerance at the clonal level, major histocompatibility restriction of T and B cell responses to viral antigens and mechanisms of T and B cell interactions are well discussed.

There are two chapters devoted to the genetics of the mouse major histocompatibility complex, which, although overlapping in the general area, are very different in detail. Similarly there are chapters on the structural basis of antibody function and on immunoglobulin genes and, to bewilder even the immunologist, a complicated chapter on the genetics, expression and function of idiotypes.

The biochemistry of T and B cell growth and differentiating factors is well advanced, even to the extent of the IL2 gene being cloned. Hence the chapters on antigen specific T cell factors and B cell growth factors are comprehensive and informative.

There are further chapters on T cell clones, immunoregulatory T cell pathways, on transplantation in experimental animals and on mediators of inflammation. All the chapters in this book assume a very high level of basic knowledge and it is only the professional research immunologist who is going to understand them and derive any benefit from these very well written, but highly complicated reviews. For the doctor wanting a more general immunological teaching, the book is not to be recommended.

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Disorders of Thrombin Formation

Edited by ROBERT W. COLMAN. *Methods in Hematology Series*, Vol. 7. Pp. xi + 161, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, New York, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, 1983. £25.00.

This edited manual provides current methodology for measurement of zymogens, the products of their enzyme cleavage and the measurement of enzyme-inhibitor complexes.

Because another volume in the same series has already been published on factors VIII and IX (haemophilia A and B) these topics are not included.

The book's focus is on the use of immunochemical techniques. Time-honoured coagulation assays involving the thrombin-fibrinogen reaction receive one chapter's attention dealing with the standardization of thromboplastin for the one stage prothrombin time and lipid for the partial thromboplastin time.

The book begins with a chapter on the use of chromogenic substrates for the assay of prothrombin, factor X, prekallikrein, factor XII and plasminogen. Thereafter there is a chapter devoted to the initial stages of the coagulation cascade. Radiochemical assays that measure the cleavage of tritiated peptides are described in the kinetic analysis of factor X. A description is provided of the very sophisticated techniques for distinguishing between the normal and abnormal prothrombin molecules in patients on warfarin. There is an interesting account of the lupus anticoagulant and how its properties can be studied. A chapter is devoted to heparin assays.

The last chapter describes how to measure fragments split from prothrombin in the generation of thrombin and also techniques for the assay of 'thrombin-antithrombin' complexes in the blood.

This book is very specialized but with the widespread interest in haemostasis and thrombosis in Western societies it deserves to be purchased extensively by coagulation laboratories. It deserves to be a success and the editor Robert W. Colman should be congratulated in his selection of contributors and in the discipline imposed by him to turn in manuscripts which represent the present state of the art at the date of publication.

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Essentials of Human Embryology

By S. M. BHATNAGAR, M. L. KOTHARI and KOPA A. MEHTA. 2nd edn. Pp. 244, illustrated. Orient Longman, Hyderabad, (Distributed by Sangam Books, London), 1983. £4.95.

An interesting book well illustrated with many line drawings, most of which are original. The diagrams are informative and are good enough to have survived rather mediocre printing and poor paper.

The book contains a useful standard text marred by a rather bizarre and naive first chapter, where the authors attempt to explain their philosophy. One can have sympathy with their views but not their inaccurate attempt to justify them.

The flow of their explanations of embryological development is marred by frequent attempts at humour, a difficult thing to achieve at the best of times, and made even more difficult in an embryology context.

If the book is to be aimed at a British market the rather verbose text must be ruthlessly pruned and the amount of detail curtailed.

If all the information in this book is essential, then one is left to wonder what the non-essential material contains. We must convey the message to authors of textbooks for medical students that the student has a vast load of information competing for his time, and what he really needs from most authors is a summary of the essentials of their subject that have a relevance to clinical learning and practice. The detailed text book has to take second place and

fulfill the role of a reference book for these parts of the subject that interest the student.

Sadly this book fills neither role. Mistakes such as the biceps being connected to the humerus together with instructions to 'feel your oral cavity' and a haranging text 'don't you find it interesting that', make the book hard to recommend as do statements that reveal an ignorance of modern literature e.g. 'primitive neurons seem almost to be programmed individually each to move and direct its axon along an elaborately predetermined course'.

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Hepatocellular carcinoma. A series of workshops on the biology of human cancer

Report No. 17. Edited by KUNIO OKUDA and IAN MACKAY. *UICC Technical Report Series*. Vol. 74. Pp. 204. International Union against Cancer, Geneva (distributed by Hans Huber, Bern, Switzerland), 1983. Sw.Fr. 44.00.

Hepatocellular carcinoma is very much in the news at the moment, being at the forefront of the revival of interest in viral carcinogenesis, and being confidently expected to be the first major human tumour to be preventable by vaccination. This monograph compiled by 12 leading workers in the field and edited by Okuda and Mackay under the auspices of the International Union against Cancer in Geneva in 1982 is therefore timely. However, to the credit of the editors, epidemiology, human and animal pathology, and putative aetiological factors other than hepatitis B virus (HBV) such as chemical carcinogenesis, cirrhosis and diet also receive detailed consideration.

It is a shame perhaps that the workshop did not extend into the area of treatment where review and analysis of current therapy and guidelines for future research are urgently needed. Nonetheless it is a sign of the pace of current research that one of the recommendations for future study, namely, vaccination and/or administration of hyperimmune globulin at the time of birth to infants born of HBV carrier mothers has recently been reported to have been successfully accomplished.

The book is marked both by its clarity and brevity. In just 150 pages, liberally illustrated with tables and diagrams, the 'state of the art is reviewed', and there is no better available launching pad for a worker wishing to enter this field.

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An International Survey of Distributions of Histologic Types of Tumours of the Testis and Ovary

Edited by HELGE STALSBERG. *UICC Technical Report Series*, Vol. 75. Pp. x + 353, illustrated. International Union Against Cancer, Geneva (Distributed by Hans Huber, Bern, Switzerland), Sw.fr.48.00, \$24.00.

The purpose of this book is to document the incidence of tumours of the testis and ovary in selected countries throughout the world. This is done in the form of contributions from pathologists, oncologists and epidemiologists from each area with an overall discussion at the end of each section by the editors. The sections on tumours of the testis and tumours of the ovary are each preceded by a discussion of the classification of these tumours which pathologists will find useful. There are, however, very few illustrations, those present being restricted to one chapter on the histological typing of ovarian cancer. Several interesting points arise out of the section on testicular tumours, including the low incidence in South America and the low incidence in blacks overall. The large British series is alone in demonstrating the important fact that the incidence of testicular tumours appears to be increasing. The section of the book devoted to ovarian tumours is much more difficult to come to grips with due to the complex histology of these tumours. The place for this book is in the large medical library rather than in the individual or even

departmental collection but this is not to detract from its value as a reference work for those interested in tumours of the gonads.

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Hospice care. Principles and Practice.

Edited by C. A. CORR and D. M. CORR. Pp. xix + 364, illustrated. Faber and Faber, London, 1983. £4.95 (paperback).

The American authors of this book, a professor of Humanities and his wife, a teacher of Nursing, present it as a 'Comprehensive resource for caregivers and students. While it has several contributions from authors in the U.K., where modern concepts of hospice care originated, it is clearly intended as a general introduction to the Hospice Movement in the U.S.A. and, like any book that covers a wide range of disciplines, it possibly fails in not being sufficiently detailed in any one of them.

Chapters by Dr Robert Twycross and Dr Mary Baines describe their pioneer work on scientific pain control, but omit their more recent work on the control of nausea and vomiting, which can often be quite as distressing as pain. Mary Cockburn writes a practical and helpful summary of nursing care, which should be compulsory reading for doctors, who sometimes forget that it is good nursing that matters most to the dying. Finally there is a valuable contribution from Averil Stedeford on Psychotherapy of the Dying Patient. This difficult area has perhaps been neglected up to now. How do you support a patient who is dying angrily?

The editors state that 'Hospice is a philosophy and not a facility'. There are many doctors in the U.K. who cannot accept such a broad claim, but do acknowledge the great value of practical teaching and exemplary care by hospices.

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An Introduction to Community Medicine

By CHARLES DU V. FLOREY, PETER BURNEY, MICHAEL D'SOUZA, ELLIE SCRIVENS and PETER WEST. Pp. vi + 134, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1983. £3.95.

The book sets out to give an overview of the subject of community medicine to medical students. The chapters pass through the sequence of dealing with a community health problem; epidemiological investigation, assessment of answer, implementation of a solution through policy making and management systems.

The early chapters suffer from the limited space available. In particular a rather restricted view of epidemiology is presented to the student. However the use of the subject of air pollution, in which the authors have expert knowledge, as an example throughout the book makes up to some extent for these shortcomings. One or two points of emphasis seem strange—for instance tolylene diisocyanate asthma and tartrazine urticaria as examples of illnesses of the modern environment.

The strength of the book lies in the last two chapters which deal with government policy and its making. This is an area where undergraduate education is in general poor and this book will be of benefit. Overall as an introduction to the subject the book is useful. However all students would need to supplement it with reading in epidemiology and statistics to gain the necessary basic foundation of knowledge.

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