information on general aspects of human papovavirus infection. Two of the articles are concerned with slow virus infection; the first evaluates the evidence that Creutzfeld-Jacob disease is a transmissible infection resembling scrapie, and the second deals with the intriguing nature of the mysterious agent. The last neurological topic is an account of the new rabies prophylactics, a subject that may be of considerable clinical importance in the near future.

Next follows a series of contributions on widely dissociated clinical topics, all of current interest. These include accounts of Lassa fever, of the newly discovered aetiological agents of viral gastroenteritis, and of the role of coxsackie viruses in myocarditis.

The book concludes with evaluations of current progress in the prophylaxis of measles, rubella and cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection. The contribution on CMV prevention is particularly timely as it is becoming increasingly apparent that CMV is more important than rubella virus as a cause of abnormality associated with intrauterine infection. Evidence is presented to support this viewpoint and this is followed by reasoned arguments for and against the introduction of vaccination to prevent such abnormality.

The topics and particularly the contributors have been well chosen by the editor. The volume as a whole is an excellent exposition of current and anticipated achievement of virological science. It will be a valuable addition to the shelves of clinical virologists and bacteriologists, but is worthy of wider readership to include physicians, paediatricians and community physicians.

R. B. HEATH

An atlas of medical microbiology: common human pathogens

By BRYAN C. STRATFORD. 1977. Oxford, London, Edinburgh and Melbourne: Blackwell Scientific Publications. Pp. xvi and 202. £5.50.

Until recently the only book devoted to illustrations of medical microbiology available in Britain was the well-established work by R. R. Gillies and the late T. C. Dodds. Dr Stratford's new Atlas is, however, the third and most comprehensive example of this genre now in print. Although the systematic bacteriological and mycological sections are less detailed than those in the recent Atlas by R. J. Olds, reviewed in 1975 (*J. med. Microbiol.*, 8, 462), Dr Stratford's book deals in addition with viruses, protozoa and helminths. It is also considerably less expensive as a result of financial support from pharmaceutical and other companies. Presumably the price could have been reduced even further if the upper half pages had not been left completely blank in more than half of the book. The text provides a generally helpful commentary on specimen collection and processing, and on the biological features of the main pathogens. Some of the author's statements are, however, misleading. Thus, in the section on antibiotic sensitivity tests, cephaloridine and flucloxacillin are recommended as being representative drugs for inclusion in disks, whereas in fact each is the most vulnerable in its group to β -lactamases, and additional technical problems are encountered with flucloxacillin. Moreover, the instruction that the inoculum should not exceed 10^3 organisms per ml in tube tests involving carbenicillin is illogical as much higher bacterial populations occur in many lesions. The uninitiated student will also obtain false impressions from such statements as "*Bordetella* grows anaerobically" and "occasionally the fungus (*Candida albicans*) may cause disease of the skin, mouth, vagina, bowel . . .". He will need to turn to other books to learn that *Bordetella* spp. are strict aerobes or that *C. albicans* is the principal cause of vaginitis. The text can be criticised on many other points of detail including the use throughout of the obsolete " μ " symbol, the description of the psittacosis and lymphogranuloma venereum agents as viruses, and lapses in nomenclature and classification.

The illustrations, in contrast, are almost invariably excellent. The only disappointments here are the absence of illustrations in the sections on the various parvobacteria, bacteroides and "higher" bacteria, and the overcrowded culture plate used to depict the technique of "plating out". Despite these reservations this book undoubtedly represents excellent value for money. It can be recommended for use by medical students in parallel with a general textbook.

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