may require specific treatment; in the reviewer's experience vidarabine is the drug of choice. The author then considers the use of cytarabine for ordinary segmental zoster. However, this must take second place to topical idoxuridine. Since the book was written, Dr Gary Simpson, in a double-blind controlled trial, carried out in Oxford, compared topical idoxuridine-indimethyl sulphoxide with cytarabine and showed that the side effects of cytarabine treatment were so unpleasant in the majority of patients as to make it probably unacceptable.

In the chapter on poxviruses, an extensive account is given of methisazone but there is no mention of idoxuridine or cytarabine, both of which are useful and effective in the treatment of vaccinia. Cytarabine saved the tour of the All Blacks in England on one occasion when a substitute player who had not previously been vaccinated developed eczema vaccinatum; treatment cleared his lesions within 3 days. The final chapter deals with myxoviruses and papovaviruses, and it would perhaps have been worth mentioning that there are reports in the literature of at least half a dozen cases of papillomata of the larynx in children that have been treated with systemic vidarabine; in at least two of them there has been no recurrence over an observation period of almost 4 years.

These are relatively minor criticisms. This book will prove extremely useful as a work of reference and not least valuable because of the excellent bibliography and relevant references. Dr Bauer is to be congratulated on having produced a volume that many engaged in the field will find of great help.

B. E. JUEL-JENSEN

Antifungal compounds. Volume 1. Discovery, development and uses

Edited by M. R. SIEGEL and H. D. SISLER. 1977. New York and Basel: Marcel Dekker Inc. Pp. xvi and 600. Swiss Fr. 175.

A single chapter on fungicides in medicine, with 11 of its 24 pages devoted to an elementary account of the mycoses, is scant justification for the purchase of this book by medical microbiologists. However, although the control of plant pathogenic fungi, the theory and practice of applying foliar sprays and the use of fungicides in wood preservation and in industry are of little relevance to medical microbiology, the volume is a useful reference source on fungicide science and ought to be available in the specialised reference libraries.

The "History of fungicides" by E. Y. Spencer and "Detecting potential protective and systemic antifungal compounds" by E. N. Pelletier make particularly interesting reading. The observation that captan may be a potent carcinogen is noteworthy, as it was once used as a topical application for superficial fungal infection in man. However, the comments that the discovery of fungicides is largely empirical and that neat relationships between structure and activity are recognised only after the activity of the compounds is discovered are surely truisms, applicable to the development of most antimicrobial compounds.

The title "Fungicides in medicine" for the chapter by Smith Shadomy, H. Jean Shadomy and G. E. Wagner is somewhat misleading, as such commonly used drugs as griseofulvin and 5-fluorocytosine are usually accepted as being fungistatic. In under 11 pages, the authors review the antifungal antibiotics amphotericin B, nystatin, primaricin and griseofulvin, and discuss concisely the newer synthetic compounds, namely, 5-fluorocytosine, the imidazole derivatives, halprogin and tolnaftate. As primaricin is not listed in the US Pharmacopeia, it is assumed that the drug referred to is pimarinic, which has the equally acceptable name natamycin. The uses of potassium iodide, stilbamidine, hamycin, candicidin, saramycetin and selenium sulphide are given, and the chapter concludes with useful comments on testing antifungal drugs in the laboratory.

It is stated that treatment failures with griseofulvin are rare, and usually occur only in nail infections and infections of the soles of the feet. In fact, treatment of *Trichophyton rubrum* infections of the toe nails is rarely successful, relapse frequently following cessation of therapy. From a medical viewpoint, the main criticism of this chapter is that the space given to an elementary account of the mycoses could have been more profitably used for additional information on the drugs.

R. R. DAVIES