BOOKS RECEIVED

Clinical problems in sexually transmitted diseases

Edited by D. R. TAYLOR-ROBINSON. 1985. Martinus Nijhoff, The Netherlands. Pp. ix and 337. £55.50.

Medical textbooks are often erudite but heavy reading. This book on clinical problems in sexually transmitted diseases, though still erudite, is written in an easy, instantly readable style. It consists of a collection of chapters written by different eminent authors. The approach taken has been to discuss the common clinical problems and their likely causes, rather than to consider the infectious agents *per se*, and then the conditions they cause. The book does not pretend to cover the whole field of sexually transmitted diseases, but only considers the everyday working problems that a genito-urinary physician is likely to encounter. These problems are divided into those primarily affecting men, those primarily affecting women and, finally, those affecting both sexes.

The first chapter, on criteria for diagnosis, lays out the pitfalls and difficulties of diagnosing sexually transmitted diseases, pointing out, in particular, the insensitivities of the common tests, the effects of observer error and the complications that arise from under-diagnosis—aspects seldom so clearly expressed in print, but extremely useful to remember in practice.

The introduction to the chapter on cervicitis describes the early development of the uterine cervix. This helps to make the appearance of the cervix, especially with naked eye, with and without infection, more understandable. The black and white figures, both in this section and other sections in the book—e.g. in the chapter on genital warts—were very clear with the points from the text well marked. The section on proctitis is also useful as it directs the clinicians' attention to the emotional problems as well as the difficulties in diagnosis.

Even though the book is essentially devoted to sexually transmitted diseases, I was rather disappointed that some mention was not made of other causes of ulceration in the chapter on genital ulceration. Patients with genital ulcers, from any cause, are so often sent to the genito-urinary physician.

This book is undoubtedly excellent for the working physician, discussing the twelve most common clinical problems in sexually transmitted diseases, with extensive bibliographies at the end of each chapter. It is not a book for the exam-swatting undergraduate, but very useful for the post-graduate student interested in the specialty, as a valuable supplement to the standard text book.

E. A. F. DAVIDSON

Mononuclear phagocytes. Characteristics, physiology and function

Edited by RALPH VAN FURTH. 1985. Martinus Nijhoff, Dordrecht, The Netherlands. Pp. xxii and 829. £145.50.

Usually there is little point in publishing conference proceedings as these hardly ever amount to more than a

random collection of experimental observations linked by a commentary hastily compiled in order to conform with the requirements of the conference organisers. Furthermore, any observations of value have usually appeared in the relevant journals long before the proceedings are published. The proceedings of the successive conferences on mononuclear phagocytes are an exception since these have now acquired a scientific status analogous with ecclesiastical synods. Both general and specialist readers can reasonably assume that anything of value will have been included in the monographs and that the peer review is commensurate with that imposed by refereed journals. These successive publications are unchallengeable compendia of the relevant data and informed commentaries. It is just as well that these publications are repositories of true learning because the most recent volume has been produced on a sumptuous scale reflected in a sumptuous price. The standard of print and photographic reproduction is truly magnificent and one has little doubt that many of the illustrations will be "lifted" directly for teaching purposes. The presentation of kinetic data in one illustration on page 248 is particularly striking and something that many investigators will emulate. I was less happy that three successive pages (818-820) should bear but one word *in toto*.

In scientific terms the contributions represent a consolidation of earlier volumes rather than any novel intellectual departures. Monoclonal antibodies figure prominently in terms of defining the phenotype of different macrophage populations at varying stages of activation. The contribution of macrophages to blood coagulation and its disorders receives more attention than has previously been the case. The format of the successive sections of the book is fairly traditional; surface properties, interactions with complement, kinetics, secretion, mobilisation, and membrane activation are all treated in detail. Of particular relevance to microbiologists, there is detailed consideration of the interactions between macrophages on the one hand and parasites such as schistosomes, malaria parasites and leprosy bacilli on the other. The transition from broad description to biochemical analysis is particularly striking in the context of persistent infections and host defence mediated by macrophages. In all, this is the definitive work on the subjects for readers with specialist interests or simply seeking an overall view.

D. DENMAN

Essentials of medical mycology

E. GLYN, V. EVANS and J. C. GENTLES. 1985. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh. Pp. xi and 195. £14.95.

This concise account of medical fungi, fungal infections and their laboratory investigation is by two university teachers with wide experience and knowledge of what the clinician or medical laboratory scientist needs to know of medical mycology, as seen in the United Kingdom. The