16, 24, and 163—are reproduced with exceptional clarity, and the number of spelling mistakes and typographical errors is few indeed. The publishers, as well as the authors, are to be congratulated on a particularly good presentation of experimental results. In fact the book, even at £30, cannot but be recommended for anyone "... working on the appropriate subjects ..." or "... whose interests border the topics dealt with in the book".

C. A. PASTERNAK

The hazard from dangerous exotic diseases

By J. C. N. WESTWOOD. 1980. Macmillan, London. Pp. x and 223. £17.50.

The chances of encountering a dangerous exotic disease in developed countries of the western world should be seen in their true perspective. Professor Westwood in his final discussion states that "while the annual death toll from road accidents is accepted by society with concern, and that from influenza, running into thousands each year, with minor interest, the occurrence of a single death from Lassa fever transmitted in a developed community would be enough to initiate a near panic from fear of the unknown and to have far-reaching political repercussions". Fear triggers action and this book is the result of concern felt in Canada about the possible importation of some dangerous exotic disease. The concern applies equally well to any developed country outside the tropics.

Professor Westwood categorises potentially threatening diseases into five groups: (1) known diseases studied sufficiently to assess their threat; (2) known diseases where foreseeable changes could bring about a dramatic escalation of the threat; (3) diseases that might develop an epidemic threat with longer-term evolutionary changes; (4) new diseases yet to be encountered; and (5) diseases that have achieved epidemiological prominence and attracted global interest to the extent that they have become politically sensitive issues.

Six diseases—smallpox, yellow fever, Lassa, Marburg, Ebola and plague—are thought to pose a significant threat to developed countries. Each is discussed in detail. Smallpox might have been omitted in view of its recent global eradication. Rift Valley fever and Crimean haemorrhagic fever might have been included in view of recent outbreaks. The third section of the book deals with the control and containment of such a disease. A swift and effective public-health response is essential. Segregation and perhaps isolation of the patient must be carried out. Patient isolators are described in detail, as is protective wear for those involved in patient care. A useful appendix discusses differential diagnosis and the laboratory investigations that might usefully be done. Other public-health measures including contact tracing, surveillance and good public relations are fully discussed.

This is an excellent and extremely readable book. It puts the problems in their true perspective. No doubt it will appeal to all infectious-disease specialists and nurses as well as community physicians and public-health officers.

D. I. H. SIMPSON

Practical guide to antimicrobial agents

By MICHAEL GINSBERG AND IRA TAGER. 1980. Williams and Wilkins Co., Baltimore and London. Pp. xii and 196. US\$21.50

This small American book fills a long-felt need although for British readers perhaps hardly in the way the authors intended. According to their preface it is meant primarily for the day-to-day practice of medicine; but for physicians in Britain accustomed to getting free copies of the Data Sheet Compendium, MIMS and the British National Formulary, a relatively expensive paperback on similar clinical ground may seem a needless extravagance. However, for a hospital laboratory there is a vast amount of useful information condensed here in less than 200 pages.