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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Winter Meeting of the PATHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

will be held at the QUEEN ELIZABETH II CONFERENCE CENTRE, LONDON ON 6–8 JANUARY 1993

Provisional programme

Wednesday, 6 January. Symposium—"Diarrhoeal disease—current concepts and future challenges."

Thursday, 7 January a.m. Symposium—"New developments in sexually-transmitted diseases" (jointly with the STD Discussion Group)

p.m. Free papers and posters.

Friday, 8 January a.m. Free papers and posters.

Further information may be obtained from: Mrs Jacqui Edwards, Pathological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 2 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AF. Tel: (071) 976 1260

BOOKS RECEIVED

The Biology of Acinetobacter

Edited by K. J. TOWNER, E. BERGOGNE-BEREZIN and C. A. FEWSON. 1991. ISBN 0-306043902-6. Plenum Press, New York. Pp. 451. \$105.

This book grew from the Second International Workshop on *Acinetobacter* held in Paris in September 1990. In their Preface, the editors write that they "...decided not simply to publish the proceedings of the Workshop, but to commission a series of review articles...", and that the book comprises "these reviews, together with a number of articles that expand on the research talks presented at the Workshop." The strengths and weaknesses of the book flow, almost inevitably, from this mode of construction.

Put simply, the book is a Commonwealth of Independent Articles, not a Union. Its extent is huge, covering taxonomy, typing, epidemiology, virulence factors, clinical role, antibiotic resistance mechanisms, genetic organisation, metabolism and industrial applications. Some of the constituent articles are comprehensive, up-to-date reviews; others describe an author's own results on selected strains supplemented with a few comments on the behaviour of the genus as a whole. The contents list does not distinguish between these types of article, which is an inconvenience to the reader. Another inconvenience is that the "new"

taxonomy, advocated by the editors in their introductory chapter, is not used by all the contributing authors. The editors note this problem which, perhaps, is understandable when one considers the chaotic history of the genus. Less forgivable are the enclaves of "old" taxonomy that remain in articles that otherwise use the new. Surely the editors could have exerted some central authority here—likewise, on one of their own number, who writes on p. 97 "Imipenem is theoretically not inactivated by β -lactamases...", followed, on p. 99, by "Although β -lactamases capable of inactivating imipenem, produced by *Pseudomonas maltophilia*..." Ah, for the days of the ruthless use of the editorial pencil!

But these quibbles about presentation and editing should not detract from the wealth of information contained in the book, nor from its timelessness. There are rich seams of information for those who care to dig a little. The book will provide an invaluable reference source to anyone undertaking research on almost any aspect of this increasingly important genus. Such workers should certainly buy a copy. Those with a more general interest in, for example, the clinical importance of the species, would be advised to peruse a library copy.

D. M. LIVERMORE