BOOKS RECEIVED

Infectious and Inflammatory Diseases and Other Nonneoplastic Disorders: Guides to Clinical Aspiration Biopsy

J. F. SILVERMAN. 1991. ISBN 0-89640-207-X. Igaku-Shoin Medical Publishers, Inc., New York. Pp. 358. £75.00.

This book is the latest volume from the series *Guides to clinical aspiration biopsy*. It deals specifically with the recognition of non-neoplastic conditions from aspirated material and is aimed primarily at histopathologists and cytologists as an aid to the morphological interpretation of aspiration samples in relation to infectious disease. The book is edited by J. F. Silverman from North Carolina and most of the contributors are from centres in North Carolina or neighbouring states, giving a very American perspective.

The opening chapters provide a general overview of fine needle aspiration and its usefulness in the diagnosis of infectious disease. Chapter 3 outlines the role of the clinical microbiology laboratory and discusses the use of various specialised stains and more recently developed techniques such as immuno-staining and in-situ hybridisation. The chapter finishes with suggested protocols for processing fine needle aspirate biopsy material to ensure maximal recovery of infectious agents; these protocols give a useful summary, but reassuringly (and perhaps rather disappointingly) do not reveal any outstanding differences from what would be regarded as normal practice in the UK.

The following chapter, "Identification of infectious micro-organisms", concentrates on the use of microscopy and immuno-staining to allow the direct recognition of various organisms. However, as might be expected, each section finishes with the statement that culture is required for confirmation and further identification.

Most of the remainder of the book is devoted to a discussion of the cytopathological features of fine needle aspirates from various tissues and anatomical sites including lymph nodes, breast, head and neck, thorax, abdomen, soft tissue, bone, prostate and the central nervous system. Although there is an emphasis on the appearances in infectious conditions, much of the text, and many of the photographs, are primarily of interest to histopathologists.

The purpose of this book is to describe and summarise the cytological features of non-neoplastic aspirates for histopathologists. Despite this, it is a useful source of information for clinical microbiologists. In my experience, it is not unusual for valuable clinical material, obtained either at a surgery or by fine needle aspiration, to be wasted because of inappropriate handling and a general lack of communication between the clinician and the various laboratories involved. Purchase of this book might be a useful catalyst to stimulate clinicians, histopathologists and clinical microbiologists to develop well-defined protocols for the handling of fine needle aspirates and similar specimens, thus improving laboratory diagnosis.

J. G. M. HASTINGS

Methods in Molecular Biology, Volume 9: Protocols in Human Molecular Genetics

Edited by C. G. MATHEW. 1991. ISBN 0-89603-205-1. Humana Press. Pp. 461. £60.00.

As we all know well, it is often very difficult to provide, never mind obtain, all the necessary technical information regarding a particular technique or approach within scientific papers. This can be infuriating and inevitably leads to

time, effort and money wasted due to the omission of seemingly unimportant detail(s). *Protocols in human molecular genetics* follows in a highly successful lineage (volumes 1–8 of *Methods in molecular biology*) adopting a format aimed to fill this gap by providing many of the essential practical details.

This book would not necessarily be the immediate or natural selection of the medical microbiologist wishing to gain insights into how to use molecular biological techniques. Closer examination of the contents page may not immediately propel the microbiologist into the act of purchasing this book (possibly with the exception of chapter 28 which deftly describes PCR methods for latent virus detection; although few of us buy a book for one chapter!). However, the majority of the chapters give details of many techniques here exemplified by gains made in understanding human gene polymorphism, which already find broad application in the study of microbial pathogenesis, epidemiology and antimicrobial therapy, and in rapid diagnosis. Not all chapters may be relevant but they should not be overlooked since they are well written and can provide many subtle insights into molecular biology that may be pertinent to us all at some stage. The inevitable and frequent criticism of books of this type is that the techniques are heavily biased towards the originating laboratory's preference(s) rather than an adequate distillation of a "fool-proof" recipe, and therefore, cannot guarantee successful application in another laboratory (especially if the source of reagents cannot be reproduced identically). This is, in my opinion, often unjustified and definitely not the case with this book. Firstly, the chapters are concisely written by many researchers with extensive experience of the nuances of the techniques described, and the chapters are juxtaposed to counterbalance personal bias that may exist. For example, the enormous variety of PCR-based methods for DNA sequencing and detection of gene polymorphisms are generally very well covered. Indeed, PCR appears in some guise, if not centrally, in nearly all chapters. Secondly, anyone attempting molecular biological techniques must expect to encounter some problems. Thirdly, each technique chapter provides for this unfortunate eventuality with a section devoted to hints on how to overcome many of these initial technical hitches. If the technique does not work having used this guide, I am convinced the operators will know sufficient about the technique to have provided their own solution! My bet is that most of the intended readership will find all that is required to establish the technique readably detailed in these chapters.

Those shrewd enough not "to judge a book by its cover" will, therefore, be rewarded with what largely lives up to the editors' aim of providing sufficient depth of practical information to allow useful molecular biological techniques to be established successfully in your laboratory. Despite the not insignificant cost, this book is one that should find a useful place on your bookshelf; although I know my copy will not stay there long but will be found persistently in the possession of one or other of my colleagues or students.

M. R. WALKER

Antibiotics and Chemotherapy, Volume 45: Bacterial Meningitis

Edited by H. SCHONFELD and H. HELWIG. 1992. ISBN 3-8055-5484-2. S Karger AG, Basel. Pp. 276. £102.60.

This volume, clearly one of a series, contains 20 papers covering a wide range of topics within the spectrum of

bacterial meningitis. The editors state that their intention was to produce a state-of-the-art monograph dealing with various aspects of meningitis, and several of the papers provide very detailed and useful reviews of current aspects of epidemiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis and therapy of bacterial meningitis, with a leaning towards North American experience. The papers dealing with cerebrospinal fluid penetration of antimicrobials and the pathogenesis of central nervous system injury in bacterial meningitis are particularly interesting and provide much information. Most papers are extensively referenced and an index is included. Inevitably, with works from several authors, there is some duplication of information, particularly relating to epidemiology, but generally this is not excessive.

The therapy of meningitis is dealt with in several papers with discussions on choice of antibiotic, dosage, duration of treatment and use of adjunctive agents including steroids, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and immunological agents such as antibacterial antibodies, anti-cytokine antibodies and the leucocyte-directed agent, pentoxifylline. It is clear from these reviews that there is no consensus of opinion on optimum treatment, and that much more work is needed to define the precise role of the newer agents in the clinical setting.

The English in one or two of the papers is a little unconventional (no doubt as a result of translation), and this can make interpretation of the text difficult.

Generally this book provides an interesting and stimulating volume which fulfils the editorial intention. There is something here for all who come across this challenging disease, although perhaps those without a particular interest may find a general text more appropriate, especially given the price of the volume.

C. CATCHPOLE

Control of Hospital Infection—a Practical Handbook

Edited by G. A. J. AYLIFFE, E. J. L. LOWBURY, A. M. GEDDES, J. D. WILLIAMS. 1992. ISBN 0-412-28440-5. Chapman and Hall Medical, London. Pp. 381. £45.00.

The publication of the third edition of *Control of hospital infection—a practical handbook* will be welcomed by all who work in the field of infection control.

The presentation in this edition is much improved by the change in type face and use of a better quality paper. The content and presentation will be immediately recognisable to those who have read and used the previous two editions of this "bible" of infection control. Although much of the content and advice remains the same, this edition incorporates changes that have occurred in the 10 years since the last edition. The emergence of HIV and AIDS resulted in their inclusion into a chapter devoted solely to "The control of viral hepatitis and human immunodeficiency (HIV) infection". Other diseases and organisms which appear for the first time or receive increased coverage include: EMRSA, pseudomembranous colitis, legionella, the viral haemorrhagic fevers and cryptosporidiosis.

A worthwhile addition to the section on surveillance and reporting of infection is a list of definitions of hospital-acquired infection applicable to different body systems. The adoption of these definitions could lead to easier comparison of infection rates between reporting centres. Unfortunately a definition for wound infection is missing.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations are briefly covered, especially with

respect to the chemical hazards associated with glutaraldehyde and ethylene oxide. Advice on the assessment of the hazards caused by microbes in the clinical setting is lacking, possibly due to the editors' uncertainty concerning the Health and Safety Executive application of COSHH Regulations to microbial infection at ward level. The possession of control of infection policies is not sufficient—hazard assessments may also be required.

Compliance with regulations for the disposal of clinical waste, including its incineration, is currently presenting problems for hospitals. The section covering this subject would have been better as a separate chapter, or as part of the chapter on responsibilities, rather than sandwiched within the section on kitchen hygiene. Kitchen hygiene and inspection is comprehensively covered but advice on ward kitchen hygiene or the microbiologically safe use of microwaves is lacking.

This handbook is one of the few which deal comprehensively with all aspects of infection control. It succeeds admirably in its aim of being a practical manual and its users will find answers to most of the questions posed to Infection Control Team members. Indeed, the advice in this manual probably forms the core of many of the control of infection policies currently employed in hospitals in the UK and even further afield. It is essential reading for trainees in medical microbiology, public health medicine and for Infection Control Nurses, as well as being a reference work for Control of Infection Doctors and other health care managers.

M. F. NOY

Viral Warts. Biology and Treatment, 2nd edition.

MARY H. BUNNEY, CLAIRE BENTON, HEATHER A. CUBIE. 1992. ISBN 0-19-262062-2. Oxford University Press. Pp. 180. £45.00.

This is the second edition of a most useful text on viral warts. The first edition was written by Dr Bunney in 1982. Since then there has been an enormous increase in interest in the biology, molecular biology and pathogenicity of papillomaviruses. The first edition has been extensively revised to take account of this and two new authors have been co-opted.

The book is subdivided into three sections. The first section deals with the virology, molecular biology, immunology and pathogenicity of papillomaviruses. It provides an excellent introduction to the topic, covering (with illustrations) new techniques, such as Southern blotting, dot-blotting, in-situ hybridisation and DNA amplification by PCR, for detecting and typing papillomaviruses. Some guidance on the relative value of these techniques is also included. Other chapters cover the immunology and immunity to wart viruses, and pathogenesis. The other two sections cover the diagnosis, clinical features, management and presentation of cutaneous and mucocutaneous warts and include useful clinical information.

The book is hard-backed and cloth-bound on good paper and contains many well-reproduced illustrations in both colour and black and white. It is written in a way that is easily accessible for readers of differing technical and clinical proficiency. I am sure it will be a useful addition to libraries in dermatology, genitourinary medicine and virology departments.

C. A. HART