

Virology

Progress in Medical Virology. Vol. 39. Ed. by J. L. Melnick. Pp. x + 270. Illustrated. £115,70. Basel: S Karger. 1992.

The appearance of the latest *Progress* has always been a welcome event for virologists, and this volume is no exception. Nine authoritative reviews are on the menu, ranging from a broad overview of vaccines against virus-related forms of cancer (Hilleman) to more sharply focused reviews on the latency of herpes simplex (Ho) and the cellular receptor for Epstein-Barr virus (McClure).

The high standard of content and editing of these volumes is maintained and the choice of subjects and contributors is still fastidiously made. For South African readers, the reviews on hepatitis B virus and hepatocellular carcinoma (Slagle *et al.*) should hold special interest, as should the exposition on the proteins of poliovirus (Boeyé and Rombaut), now that the paucity of this virus and its outbreaks makes exact fingerprinting and tracing of the causative strains by molecular epidemiology so important. The other contributions are on herpes zoster pathogenesis and latency (Gilden *et al.*), anti-idiotypic antibodies in coxsackievirus myocarditis (Paque), immuno-suppression during oncogenic pox virus infection (Strayer) and safety-testing of viral inocula used for rhinovirus experiments on volunteers (Gwaltney *et al.*), the last being surprisingly informative on the general safety-testing of virus-containing preparations.

While paging through these chapters, one is again struck by the immense technological advances made in medical virology over the last decade. What is even more impressive is that some of the authors are the same ones who also wrote reviews decades ago in the era of pre-molecular virology, giving us continuity and a holistic perspective that adds to insight and understanding.

These annual reviews are aimed at the expert and do not make easy or casual reading. For virologists, molecular biologists, immunologists, viral oncologists and the more

technologically oriented epidemiologists, this volume is a valuable addition to their collections.

The only problem is that, as could be expected, the book is horrendously expensive in South Africa and will probably have to be bought by the few libraries that can still afford it.

O. W. PROZESKY

Assisted reproduction

Micromanipulation of Human Gametes and Embryos. By J. Cohen, H. E. Malter, Beth E. Talansky and J. Grifo. Pp. ix + 325. Illustrated. \$111,50. New York: Raven Press. 1992.

This book deals with an interesting if very specialised aspect of assisted reproduction. The authors are well known in this field and have attempted to review this subject comprehensively.

The book starts with the history of the techniques and the early uses to which they were put. The early development of these skills and use in animal husbandry is reviewed. Most of the book concentrates on the use of micromanipulation in human assisted reproduction and there are separate chapters on microsurgical fertilisation, micromanipulation, preconception and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis and techniques for embryological micromanipulation.

Each section reviews the background to the techniques, and discusses some of the basic sciences and the uses of the techniques. There is enough detail for the expert to extrapolate into his own clinical practice, while for the non-expert the book is easy to read.

I think that the major limitation of the book is the audience to which it would appeal. Being a highly specialised area of reproductive medicine, it would be of interest mainly to those who practise in this field. It may also be of value in medical and scientific libraries.

Z. VAN DER SPUY

BOOKS / BOEKE

Congenital rubella syndrome

Epidemiology and Infection. Vol. 107 No. 1. Ed. by J. R. Pattison, D. Baxby, J. G. Cruickshank, C. R. Madeley and W. C. Noble. Pp. viii + 239. Illustrated. £25. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1991.

Until 50 years ago, rubella was considered to be no more than a trivial exanthem of childhood. In 1941, after a rubella epidemic in Australia, ophthalmologist Norman Gregg published his historic paper demonstrating the link between congenital cataracts and rubella virus infection in pregnancy. Despite the many advances made since this discovery, congenital rubella syndrome is still a problem.

This special issue of the journal *Epidemiology and Infection* commemorates the 50th anniversary of Gregg's historic publication with a re-issue of the original paper, accompanied by a series of reviews covering topics such as: the laboratory diagnosis of rubella; the significance of re-infection with rubella in pregnancy; rubella vaccine development; the epidemiology of rubella and congenital rubella syndrome in the post-vaccine era in the First World and the epidemiology of rubella in the developing world.

The section on the laboratory diagnosis of rubella is comprehensive and should be of particular interest to clinicians involved in the management of pregnant patients; the problem of a rubella-like rash still causes considerable alarm.

The reviews on the epidemiology of rubella and congenital rubella syndrome highlight the potentially disastrous effects that poorly designed vaccination campaigns may have on the incidence of congenital rubella syndrome. Such lessons are of particular relevance to South Africa where rubella vaccination has not yet been introduced as part of the compulsory immunisation schedule.

The reviews are highly readable and, published as they are in journal format, up to date. I recommend this volume as a valuable source of reference for those working in laboratories performing viral serology and for clinicians involved in the care of pregnant patients.

D. R. HARDIE

Rural and urban hospitals

The Hospital in Rural and Urban Districts: Report of a WHO Study Group on the Function of Hospitals at the First Referral Level. Pp. vii + 74. SFr.120. Geneva: World Health Organisation. 1992.

The Declaration of Alma-Ata, adopted on 12 September 1978 by the International Conference on Primary Health Care, stated that primary health care remains the key to attaining 'Health for All by the year 2000'. This target was to be one facet in a plan for bringing about social justice through the comprehensive development of a country and its people.

The World Health Organisation has been a leader in promoting an ethos appropriate to the attaining of such a noble goal. The publication of its technical series is in response to the need for expert information and advice and titles reflect a wide variety of subjects related to health care. This particular publication puts the role of the hospital into focus within the greater context of a comprehensive health care service. It explores the relationship between the district hospital and the community; the reshaping of the functions of such a hospital that may have to take place for it to reach its full potential as a district health system; and offers practical and detailed advice as to how appropriate systems and structures may be developed and managed efficiently and effectively towards that end.

This is an extraordinarily comprehensive handbook directed at every level of health care worker, whether professional or lay at primary through to tertiary care levels. South Africa is in the process of restructuring its health care services, negotiating a switch to primary health care. Much is uncertain, particularly the methods to be adopted in giv-

ing expression to new policies. From our perspective, this book could not have been published at a more appropriate time. It is essential reading for health care administrators, community and family practice physicians, nurses and allied health care professionals.

R. M. PELTERET

Perinatology

Perinatology: Nestlé Nutrition Workshop Series. Vol. 26. Ed. by Erich Saling. Pp. xiii + 194. Illustrated. \$69. New York: Raven Press. 1992.

Anyone with access to the previous 25 volumes in the *Nestlé Nutrition Workshop* series will know just how valuable these books are. Key areas are identified, contributions are solicited from eminent researchers, and participants are carefully selected to obtain maximum benefit from the presentations and structured group discussions that follow.

Volume 26, which covers perinatology, is edited by Professor Erich Saling of the Free University of Berlin. The list of contributors is impressive and contributions are compact, well-structured and informative. However, the book cannot be considered a comprehensive reference source. Rather, it is a useful continuing medical education aid containing current views on a range of topics. On the obstetric side the focus is on antenatal diagnosis and ante- and intrapartum assessment of the fetus. Chorionic villus sampling, fetal therapy, modern methods of DNA diagnosis, antepartum magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and fetal ECG waveforms are studied and reported, leaving the reader with a sense of having been provided with responsible, reliable and above all, current information.

The neonatal section highlights amniotic fluid and other infections as causes of fetal and neonatal morbidity and mortality. Modern research is also discussed, from prevention of late abortion and/or preterm delivery to new techniques including near-infrared spectroscopy, MRI, artificial surfactant therapy and extracorporeal membrane oxygenation.

These books are always of high quality and are widely recognised as valuable and important chronicles of developments in the particular areas covered.

A. D. ROTHBERG

Anaesthetists

Five Decades: The South African Society of Anaesthetists 1943 - 1993. By Nagin Parbhoo. 330 pages and 70 photos and illustrations. Published by the South African Society of Anaesthetists. Printed by National Book Printers.

In September 1987, the Council of the South African Society of Anaesthetists invited Dr Nagin Parbhoo to be archivist to the Society and to record the 50-year history since its foundation in 1943. Few anaesthetic societies have in fact made the effort to record their history. It has only been through the generous sponsorship and interest of ICI (Pharmaceuticals) that a project of this nature has been made possible.

There is an interesting account of the beginnings of anaesthesia in South Africa, the events that led to the foundation of the Society, and in particular, biographies of those pioneers in anaesthesia whose efforts have shaped the future. The author has always felt that it is man that maketh a society and therefore there is an added emphasis on the individual in this history.

The President of the World Federation of the Societies of Anaesthesiologists, Dr John Zorab, F.R.C.A., of Frenchay Hospital, Bristol wrote the foreword. Of the original 29 founder members 4 are still alive and reasonably well. *Five Decades* is to be launched on 15 March 1993, during the South African Society of Anaesthetists Jubilee Congress.

NAGIN PARBHOO