

comprehensive reference book in the library or at home. It can help prepare a lecture, bring you up-to-date with the subject, and be of help in discussion of clinical or more basic scientific areas.

The printing quality of this book is good which also applies to the quality of photographs (histology, cytology, X-rays, or CT-scans). All tables and illustrations are in black and white, the art work is not standardized and the choice of illustrations has been left to the individual authors. This brings an in-balance as some authors prefer original data, while others express more personal opinions. More uniform presentation of illustrations are recommended in forthcoming editions.

R. Dahl

### **Methylxanthines and phosphodiesterase inhibitors in the treatment of airways disease**

J. F. COSTELLO AND P. J. PIPER, eds

London: Parthenon, 1994, 200 pages, £28.00.

This book is a collection of papers presented at a meeting held in London in November 1993. Overall, the book has been put together well and the information is a reasonable summary of the information available at the time of the meeting. Inevitably, with the necessary delays in producing the publication, some of the chapters, in this rapidly progressing field, appear a little dated. The authors are international authorities in the field and this book represents a good summation of information currently available. Although theophylline has been used for over 50 yr in the treatment of asthma, its place in modern management and its molecular mechanisms of action are still uncertain. There is increasing evidence that theophylline is more than a bronchodilator in asthma management and much of this information is discussed in the book. Not only is the use of theophylline in asthma considered, but its role in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cystic fibrosis, which are often overlooked, is also included.

There has been particular interest in the possibility that theophylline may exert its anti-asthma effect through inhibition of phosphodiesterases in airway smooth muscle and inflammatory cells. There are excellent chapters on PDE isoenzymes and the effects of selective PDE inhibitors on airway functions. The future potential of selective PDE inhibitors (particularly PDE IV inhibitors) in asthma is also considered. The answer is not yet known, as clinical trials are still underway.

It is not surprising that in a book covering a restricted subject there will be a certain amount of overlap between chapters, but each chapter can also be read in isolation and represents a good state-of-the-art review. This book is of particular value as a reference source and I would strongly recommend it to all medical libraries. It is reasonably good value for money and some researchers may benefit from a personal copy.

P. J. Barnes

### **Tuberculosis**

L. L. LUTWICK, ed.

London: Chapman and Hall, 1994, 378 pages, £25.00

*Tuberculosis* is an introduction to primary care physicians and a reference book for the internist and infectious disease clinician. It covers recent epidemiologic trends and the relations to the HIV epidemic, immigration, local social/economic conditions and development of MT drug resistance.

The clinical forms of pulmonary and extrapulmonary tuberculosis in adults, children and in HIV are dealt with. Diagnostic tools such as microscopy and culture for MT and use of the tuberculin test are reported in detail. The control of infection transmission with emphasis on treatment but also chemoprophylaxis and BCG-vaccination is mentioned and the legal situation in the U.S.A. is outlined. The drugs used in treatment, their mechanisms and side-effects, and combination therapy and the established effective regimes are covered with emphasis on observed treatment. The special conditions for treatment in AIDS/tuberculosis and the many problems when multi-drug resistance is present are also laid out. There is a final short chapter on diseases due to other mycobacteria than tuberculosis.

The book covers the present situation in tuberculosis well and gives a good introduction to each of the aspects dealt with. The references for each chapter are ample and also cover 1993. Although a multi-author book, there is no repetition and the editor has succeeded in getting the same easily-read style throughout.

The chapter on the radiologic aspects of tuberculosis is short and not helpful for the physician without a firm grip on tuberculosis. The chapter on extrapulmonary tuberculosis has a certain outdated flavour, partly due to the rather scarce recent literature on this aspect of tuberculosis in non-HIV patients, and the limited space.