

community-based care. The complex and burgeoning basic science of the molecular basis of oncogenesis is admirably explained, together with a good analysis of current epidemiological trends. An overview of the main treatment modalities followed by some specific management plans for the commoner tumour sites illustrates the integrated nature of modern oncology practice. The chapters on psychosocial care and communication with patients are excellent. Ethics, economics and a discussion on the problems encountered in making rational purchasing decisions are effectively addressed. Much expensive chemotherapy is still largely wasted – given to patients with very little chance of recovery – simply to avoid removing all hope. Only by constructing and adhering to guidelines can practice be rationalised. This short book will be of great value in explaining the mysteries of cancer care to a wide audience.

Cancer care in the hospital focuses in more detail on the technical aspects of care. It is always difficult to find the right pitch for this sort of title. The latest information on cancer treatment is now better obtained by surfing the internet than from any textbook, however detailed. The chapters are written mainly by the same people who wrote the community volume and even some of the text is the same. Far more specific information is given for the management of patients with common specific tumours. This volume will certainly be of value to SHOs, medical students interested in cancer and other hospital-based professionals who deal with cancer patients.

British cancer services are now in the process of reorganisation. A network of cancer units in general hospitals will replace the current haphazard provision of specialist care. The units will be linked to centres to provide quality control, making sure that wherever patients enter the network, they will receive optimal care. But the critical components will be effective com-

munication at all levels. These two volumes contain an excellent and clearly written knowledge base for all involved in the reorganisation.

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Lecture Notes on Immunology. (Third edition). By Gordon Reeves and Ian Todd. Blackwell Science, Oxford 1996. 285pp. £12.95.

Since their appearance, the 'Lecture Notes' series have offered concise, affordable and (usually) well-written texts aimed largely at medical students and, in some cases, junior doctors. Some of these texts have become minor classics, other titles have been less innovative and inspiring and there has clearly been an editorial policy to produce a 'Lecture Notes' for every conceivable subject in the undergraduate medical curriculum. Immunology, with its ramifications into every aspect of medicine, justifies a volume, and all physicians benefit from a working knowledge of the immune system.

Lecture Notes on Immunology (third edition) is pitted against stiff opposition, notably that of the Mosby series originated by Roitt and colleagues, who were undoubtedly the pioneers in making immunology visually accessible by the use of liberally illustrated, multicolour texts including photographic reproductions of histopathological and immunopathological specimens. The colour battle has not been seriously taken on by 'Lecture Notes'. Despite the assertion on the back of the book 'Now for the first time illustrated in colour' the addition of red to a previously monochrome book has something of the tongue-in-cheek salesmanship of Henry Ford.

There is no doubt that this book is both concise and comprehensive. For its size it packs in an enormous quantity of data. This is leavened by some entertaining

anecdotes which provide a historical view or a broader perspective on a subject. It is up to date and I found few factual errors and inconsistencies. The speed with which microbial taxonomy changes makes it understandable that *Rochalimea* is used instead of *Bartonella*. Perhaps less forgivable is the inclusion of *Pneumocystis carinii* under protozoa instead of as a fungus. The suppressor T cell makes a number of appearances in different chapters, apparently as a definitive lymphocyte lineage in some illustrations, yet in only one chapter is there an acknowledgement that they are unlikely to be a distinct subpopulation.

At a personal level, I found that the two shades of red used did not imprint the pictures very well in the memory and for those studying for exams, factual recall is vital. Occasional pictures are excellent such as the diagram of immunological damage in skin and kidney. In some areas the writing is fluent and readable but in many others the length of sentence and the word usage would not have pleased Fowler. The key points seem over-elaborate and could be made more 'punchy'.

However, this addition to the Lecture Notes stable more than adequately fulfils its aim of covering the immunological knowledge required by 'medical students, junior doctors and other post-graduates'. It has no major advantage over its competitors other than its convenient size within which is compressed an impressive depth of factual detail, but it is not comprehensive enough (and not intended) to be a reference book. Indeed, as a reference, *Clinical Aspects of Immunology* by Lachmann, Peters, Rosen and Walport, appears in the further reading list of almost every chapter. This is unlikely to have disappointed the publishers who are also Blackwell.

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