

Book Reviews

The Role of the Spleen in the Immunology of Parasitic Diseases Schwabe & Co AG, Basle, 1979.

This fascinating little book contains the proceedings of a meeting held in Geneva in 1978 under the auspices of the UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases. It is the first volume of a new Tropical Diseases Research Series.

Almost the only criticism is the title, which I fear may lead potential readers to dismiss the book as too narrow in outlook. In reality the reverse is true and the book should be read by clinicians and fundamental research workers alike, whether or not their interest lies in tropical disease. The 29 participants cover all aspects of the spleen including structure and physiology, lymphocyte recirculation and sequestration, role in immunity and immunoregulation, regulation of the clearance of circulating material and role in several animal and human parasitic diseases and in the tropical splenomegaly syndrome. All this is covered authoritatively by people who one suspects have never sat down in the same room before. Thus the discussions between papers often make exciting reading and the organizers must be congratulated for arranging such a programme.

Since this is a leprosy journal, it may be appropriate to highlight some points which seemed particularly relevant, though mycobacteria are not mentioned. No doubt other readers will find different gems to suit their own particular tastes.

It is clear that both in mice and man, the mycobacterioses are accompanied by a disturbance of lymphocyte recirculation

and by sequestration of antigen-reactive cells. Two chapters, by W L Ford and J Sprent, are devoted to this topic.

There is increasing interest in the possibility that antigens of the leprosy bacilli may trigger immunosuppressive mechanisms by travelling directly to the spleen via the blood stream. J R Battisto discusses such mechanisms.

Leprologists have long been puzzled by the ability of *Mycobacterium leprae* to exist free in the cytoplasm of infected cells. How can they be removed from such a site? Drs Nogueira and Cohn report that when *Trypanosoma cruzi* has 'escaped' into the cytoplasm of macrophages, activation of those macrophages *in vitro* will result in membranes reappearing round the parasites. Is there some kind of recognition system for 'foreign' particles within macrophages?

I hope these few points will suffice to whet the appetite of other potential readers.

G A W ROOK

[This is No. 1 in a series of 3. No. 2 is entitled *The Membrane Pathobiology of Tropical Diseases* and No. 3 *The in vitro Cultivation of the Pathogens of Tropical Diseases – Editor.*]

Le Pied du Lépreux (The Foot in Leprosy), by Raymond and Pierre Jaccard. Editions Fondations Raoul Follereau, 33 rue de Dantzig 75015 Paris, France. 113 pp.

This very practical manual written especially for workshop technicians making protective footwear for the anaesthetic and deformed feet of leprosy sufferers, but likely to prove of interest to anybody having anything to do with the victims of neglected leprosy, will be an indispensable guide and reference book to those fortunate enough to secure a copy. It is profusely illustrated with line drawings and diagrams. It gives precise instructions for making footwear that uses locally available materials, and avoids expensive imported plastics. This, of course, makes for low cost as well as for acceptability. The wearer of such shoes does not feel himself stigmatized; the closer his shoes are to what his healthy fellows are wearing, the more likely is he to make a habit of wearing the shoes and thus protecting his insensitive feet from damage.

While one can appreciate the rather simplistic attitude to both leprosy and to materials and designs, one can forgive some misunderstanding of the complex pathology of plantar ulceration; for instance, not every ulcer is indicative of an underlying osteitis, nor are arteries compressed by hypertrophic nerves. A leprologist shies away from using the word 'cure' in respect of a plantar ulcer in the sense that cicatrization is the goal of treatment. It is scarcely true that 95% of plantar ulcers are due to ill-fitting footwear, or that 90% of patients requiring protective footwear live in villages.

However, these are minor blemishes to offset the undoubted value of the book for the people it is written for.

While it may still be true that the most important technicians in an old-style leprosarium are the surgeon and the footwear-maker, who both have to cope with the backlog of neglected leprosy, the day should surely dawn when preventable deformity (and plantar ulceration) is actually prevented, and when such a book as *Le Pied du Lépreux* is of historic interest only.

S G BROWNE

Atlas de Histologia del Armadillo de 7-Bandas (*Dasyopus hybridus*), by Alberto Cuba Caparo. Centro Panamericano de Zoonosis, Casilla No. 3092, Correo Central, 1000 Buenos Aires, Republic of Argentina, 1979.

This is a paperback book of 166 pages, A4 size, and 1 cm thick. It is written in Spanish and is not stated to be available in other languages. The author, who is a medical pathologist of distinction from the Medical School of Lima, describes the histopathology of this armadillo under the following main headings: skin and adnexae; lymphatic system; respiratory system; circulatory system; nervous system; male and female genital apparatus; endocrine glands; blood and bone marrow. There is an informative introduction covering various aspects of this animal's morphology, biology, genetics, natural diseases, teratogenesis and application in the experimental study of infectious disease. Those who have had experience of the histology of this animal and the opportunity to compare it with *novemcinctus* and *sabanicola* have the impression that there are not important differences between the three. After some initial difficulties with the printing of this book, it is now very well presented, and should be of great interest and value to those who study armadillo tissues at microscopical level. Obtainable from the Office of Publications, PAHO, 525 Twenty-third Street, Washington DC 20037, USA.

A C McDOUGALL

Due to lack of space in this Volume further Reviews and Abstracts will be included in the next issue

Editor