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- Lindemans, J., van Kapel, J., and Abels, J. (1975). Evaluation of a radioassay for serum folate and the effects of ascorbate and methotrexate. *Clinica Chimica Acta*, **65**, 15-20.
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The April 1977 Issue

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- Technical method*
The Micro-Compu-Pet: a multi-channel diluter and dispenser B. MELLARS
- Letter to the Editor
- Book reviews

marrow production of neutrophils and their fate. The book does not, however, deal to any extent with neutrophil pathology. In his inevitably brief treatment of better ploughed fields, such as, again, chemotaxis and killing, I think he has struck about the right balance. The book also has the merit, in an age when papers become obsolete in about 18 months, of keeping an historical perspective and showing us that our predecessors were quite intelligent and capable of doing useful experiments. The discussion is firmly based in the pathology of inflammation. For me the book was too brief on most topics, but beginners in neutrophil work may find this a virtue and use the book as a starting-point to explore their own areas of interest. Dr Murphy has a somewhat dogmatic style and often refers to hypotheses as being 'completely disproved' and ideas as 'finally disposed of' by workers who perhaps may not themselves have wished to make their case in quite such emphatic terms. Despite this, I shall certainly lend my copy of Dr Murphy's book to people beginning in the laboratory as a useful introduction to the neutrophil. There were lots of things I learnt from it myself and intend to follow up by looking up some of the useful references listed by chapter at the back of the book.

P. C. WILKINSON

Clinical Chemistry in Diagnosis and Treatment. 2nd edition. By Joan F. Zilva and J. R. Pannall. (Pp. xxi + 498; illustrated; £3.00.) London: Lloyd-Luke. 1975.

Revision of this book has inevitably led to an increase in length, largely on account of new concepts and applications in clinical chemistry, particularly those relevant to endocrinology. This second edition provides an excellent text for undergraduates, for whom it is primarily written. The style of the text makes the book easy reading for those undertaking revision for the primary examinations of the Royal Colleges, and, coupled with the very carefully selected suggestions for further reading given at the end of each chapter, this should provide a valuable base for study leading to the MCB or final MRC Path examinations.

One excellent feature of the book which makes each chapter easy to read, but also makes the text a useful reference source, is the relegation of details of special investigations to an appendix at the end

of each chapter. Another excellent feature is the inclusion of chapters on sources of error in chemical tests and the indications for requesting investigations (or, rather, the contraindications for excessive investigation). What a pity these are the last chapters and therefore less likely to be read. In fact, the importance of their contents is such that they could well act as the introduction to the book and change places with the brief, but useful, information relating to units of measurement and conversion tables which could be placed at the end of the book.

While the purist may well find fault with an individual chapter, the authors are to be congratulated on producing a second edition which will undoubtedly be held in the same high esteem as its predecessor.

C. A. PENNOCK

Drug Metabolism: Chemical and Biochemical Aspects. Drugs and the Pharmaceutical Sciences. Volume 4. By Bernard Testa and Peter Jenner. (Pp. xiii + 500; illustrated; Sw Fr. 160.00.) New York and Basel: Marcel Dekker. 1976.

The book is part of the series 'Drugs and the Pharmaceutical Sciences'. The authors have approached their subject with a well-defined plan. They have started by classifying the chemical reactions in which drugs can take part by virtue of functional groups and structural elements. This, together with a presentation of metabolic schemes of selected drugs and the stereochemical aspects of drug metabolism, occupies about half of the book. In this section the chemistry of phase I reactions, which involve the transformation of specific groups and the creation of new functional groups, and phase II reactions, which are involved in the conjugation of drugs, are clearly described for a large number of drugs. The reader will readily find for many drugs the fundamental information which is often required but not easily accessible. The second half of the book is concerned with the way in which animals (mammals) handle drugs at the cellular level, both intrahepatic and extrahepatic. The enzyme systems involved in phase I and phase II reactions are comprehensively covered as are the induction and inhibition of drug-metabolising enzyme systems. Observed differences dependent on species, sex, and age are referred to, and there is a short section on placental drug metabolism.

The style and presentation of the book are admirable. Within its limited compass

the work is encyclopaedic, each topic being discussed in the form of a short article with its own references. The articles, of course, follow the logic of the book but, because of the absence of an overall narrative form, it is easy to find the information which one requires about a particular aspect of the subject. However, as with all good encyclopaedias, it is very easy to be led down some fascinating trail away from one's original enquiry.

The reviewer would have liked somewhat more space to be devoted to the physicochemical handling of drugs in the body but, given the frightening price of nearly £40 for a book which is 500 pages long, perhaps one should not stress this. It is difficult to see how an individual could purchase this fine book. One only hopes in these days of austerity that not too many librarians will be deterred.

M. G. RINSLER

Notice

Conference on clinical perspectives of CEA
A Conference on Clinical Perspectives of Carcinoembryonic Antigen (CEA) will be held 1 to 3 June 1977 at the University of Kentucky Medical Center, Lexington, Kentucky. Its purpose is to assess the current clinical uses of CEA assays in the management of cancer patients and to discuss various new approaches for measuring and detecting CEA in body fluids and tissues. Emphasis will be placed on determining the value and problems of CEA tests in various clinical practices. Part of the conference will be devoted to the basic questions of the immunology and chemistry of CEA, immunocytochemistry of CEA in the pathology laboratory, and a discussion of other new markers identified in tumours which may prove of value for cancer immunodiagnosis.

Contact Dr. D. M. Goldenberg, Division of Experimental Pathology, MDRF No. 3, University of Kentucky Medical Center, Lexington, Kentucky 40506, USA.