Book Reviews

Apology
The publishers wish to draw their readers' attention to the fact that the book review 'Urological Oncology' published in the British Journal of Cancer (1993) p. 407, contained incorrect publishing details. The review refers to 'Urological Oncology – Dilemmas and Developments' edited by A.R. Alderson et al. and published by John Wiley & Son, and in no way refers to 'Urological Oncology' edited by Waxman and Williams, published by Edward Arnold. The correct version is reprinted below. A review of the Waxman and Williams book will appear in a future issue of BJC. We apologise to the editors and publishers of both books for this most unfortunate error.

Urological Oncology – Dilemmas and Developments, Edited by A.R. Alderson, R.T.D. Oliver, I.W.F. Hanham & H.I.G. Bloom, Chichester: John Wiley & Son, 1991, 357 pp. £65.00.

I am always somewhat wary of books based on conferences and when only some of the editors contribute chapters. Since the conference was in 1988, the first puzzle is to why it has taken so long to get into print and this remains the main problem of this book. It is a mid-1980s view of urological cancer.

The four main urological tumours are assessed separately and a very clinical approach has been taken. There is therefore no room for the advances in understanding some of these tumours at the molecular level, nor any discussion as to the potential value of screening in prostate cancer, for example. The exception of radical surgery or radiotherapy for patients with early disease. Testicular cancer gets a better coverage, although the only chapters which stand out are by Donohue on the controversy of retroperitoneal lymphadenopathy versus surveillance in early stage disease and by Horwich on the identification of patients with good and bad risk metastatic teratoma.

This book shows some of the steady progress being made in the management of urological cancer and it suffers as a result of continued progress since it only patchily reflects 1980s practice. This book may be a tribute to the late Professor Bloom but it is not a valuable addition to any departmental library in 1992.

P.I. Clark

Gynaecological Oncology
Edited by H.E. Lambert & P.R. Blake, Oxford: OUP, 1992, 230 pp. £14.95.

The management of patients with gynaecologic cancer is complex. The development of a multi-disciplinary approach, with teams of surgeons, radiotherapists and medical oncologists, requires that all staff participating in the care of these patients should be well informed about the different disciplines that are involved. This handbook aims to provide basic information about all aspects of gynaecologic cancer for trainees in gynaecology and oncology, both medical and nursing, and also for other medical and paramedical staff who become involved in the treatment of these patients. Targeted at this non-specialist group, the book hits the mark. However, for anyone requiring a more detailed insight into the management of gynaecologic cancer, particularly oncologists in training, this book is excessively superficial to the point of being misleading in several instances. Nevertheless, by collecting basic information about disease aetiology, staging and treatment in a single small volume, complemented by a useful section on supportive care, the authors have produced a useful work particularly suitable as a reference book for gynaecologic surgery wards.

R.J. Osborne

The Insulin-Like Growth Factors. Structure and Biological Functions
P.N. Schofield, Oxford: OUP, 1992, 284 pp. £30.00.

This book is well worth reading whether you are an embryologist, cell biologist, endocrinologist, neurologist or oncologist – such is the diversity of processes in which the insulin-like growth factors (IGF's) play key regulatory roles. As the editor Paul Schofield says in the preface to this book, there has been over the last decade a veritable explosion of knowledge concerning the IGFs in both normal and pathological states, and the The Insulin-Like Growth Factors: Structure and Biological Functions represents a valuable central source of data and expert analysis.

The book begins with concise and clearly written chapters on the structure of the IGFs and their genes, including important topics such as IGF regions involved in receptor-binding protein- and antibody-interactions, transcriptional regulation and genomic imprinting. The chapter on IGF receptors is an excellent source of information covering structure, evidence for hybrid receptors, receptor biosynthesis, purification and cDNA cloning, and signal transduction. R.H. McCusker and D.R. Clemmmons provide in their chapter on the structure and biological functions of the insulin-like growth factor binding proteins (IGFBP's) one of the best discussions I have read on the subject, particularly with regard to biological activity, and although two more IGFBP's have been identified since this chapter was written, it remains for the most part, a state-of-the-art analysis of a huge amount of data.

The next several chapters address the hormonal nature of IGF action and their roles in normal and pathological processes, including embryonic and foetal development, tissue growth and regeneration, and tumourigenesis. I found the chapter on the latter subject, by the editor and W. Engstrom particularly thought-provoking, especially with regard to the question of the causal relationship between IGF expression and tumourigenesis. The final chapter on the role of the insulin-like growth factors in the nervous system seems, at first site, somewhat out of place at the end of the book. However, this account of the importance of the IGFs in regulation of brain growth and the maintenance of the mature nervous system serves to provide a summary for the book by bringing together, in a single system, many of the features of IGF action and regulation discussed in previous chapters.

In conclusion, this comprehensive textbook fills a valuable need in detailing the major advances in IGF research and providing a synthesis of current ideas about the many and various roles of these factors.

J.G. Reeve