**Book Reviews**

**Manual of Gynaecologic Oncology.** H. R. K. Barber (1981). Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott. 324 pp. £11.75 net.

This single-author American book aims to provide a reference for the practising gynaecologist faced with a patient with malignant disease. It is written in a note style without bibliography and with only a few eponymous references scattered through the text. The cancer-management policies described are therefore simplified, though, with a little attention to detail, might have represented a reasonable scheme for a gynaecological oncology unit. The practising gynaecologist will find the physics, immunology, radiotherapy and chemotherapy chapters difficult to read and of little practical value. The book may well contain useful information for those preparing for multiple-choice questions in the American Board Diploma in Gynaecologic Oncology, but I doubt that it will contribute much to the education of junior gynaecologists in the United Kingdom.

R. Hunter

**Histological Typing of Prostate Tumours.** F. K. Mostofi, I. Sesterhenn and L. H. Sobin (1981). Geneva: WHO. 25 pp. Sw. Fr. 26 net.

This is Number 22 in the International Histological Classification of Tumours published by WHO. As well as the prostate, it also deals with the seminal vesicles.

The classification advocated is, in general, uncontroversial, though a few questions, such as basal cell hyperplasia, are unfamiliar. The accompanying illustrative colour photomicrographs are, as usual, of high quality.

The brevity of the text may be too extreme. A case could be made for a little more detail in some instances. For example, are the diagnostic criteria for adenoid cystic carcinoma of the prostate the same as those used for other sites? And why is the tumour illustrated in Fig. 45 considered to be of phyllodes type? Perhaps the way around the the problem would be to include a highly selective bibliography, a feature which has been deliberately excluded from most of the series, but which would add greatly to the value of the book whilst adding only one page to the text.

However, these are quibbles, and the value of the book lies in the promotion of a standardized nomenclature. It should, therefore, be on the shelves of every department of histopathology.

M. Harris

**Metal Carcinogenesis Testing: Principles and In vitro Methods.** M. Costa (1980). New Jersey, U.S.A.: Humana Press Inc. 164 pp + xii. Price not given.

The main purpose of this book is to consider in detail in vitro methods relevant to ascertaining how, why and which metals cause cancer, and the potency of those that do. The first section deals briefly with the evidence from epidemiological and experimental studies relevant to metal carcinogenesis. The text of this part is sketchy, and although the author has in general drawn attention to relevant literature and presented a balanced view of the evidence, it is surprising that he has not referred to the IARC Monograph Series which summarizes and assesses the available data in more detail.

On p. 27 he refers to "malignant transformation of Leydig cells". This description is misleading. Cadmium-associated Leydig-cell tumours are invariably benign, and only appear after total destruction of seminiferous tubules and the appearance of castration cells in the pituitary gland. In other words, they are almost certainly a consequence of hormonal imbalance following the destruction of seminiferous tubules, and not a consequence of any direct genotoxic action of cadmium on Leydig cells. Interpretation of the effects of cadmium on Leydig-cell tumour incidence in rats is complicated by the fact that in some strains of untreated males Leydig-cell tumour incidence rises close to 100%.

The second part of the book concerns molecular mechanism of metal carcinogenesis. Here, there is no mention of the intracellular inclusion found in cells of the proximal renal tubules in all species excessively exposed to lead. Since the kidney tumours seen in rats
and mice that survive very heavy exposure to lead probably arise in these very tubules, this omission is surprising.

The third part of the book concerns in vitro methodology, which one feels is much more the author’s home ground. Here, however, he is involved in a rapidly growing area of molecular biology, with the result that the methods he recommends and the costs he cites were almost bound to have been overtaken during the time it took to produce the book.

My greatest doubt, however, is whether it is sensible to lump metals together on the assumption that if they cause cancer they will do so by a common mechanism which is in some way distinctive. On the basis of presently available knowledge, it would be wiser to expect that metal carcinogenesis involves as wide a variety of mechanisms as non-metal carcinogenesis.

F. J. C. Roe

Metastasis—Clinical and Experimental Aspects. Eds K. Hellmann, P. Hilgard and S. Eccles (1980). London: Martinus Nijhoff. 456 pp. 125 guilders net.

This volume is a collection of about 90 verbal papers and posters presented at a meeting of the Metastasis Group of the EORTC held early in 1980. It is a further example of “The Book of the Meeting”. Although just about every aspect of current metastasis research is covered (invasion, coagulation, prostaglandins, heterogeneity, therapy, etc., etc.), it is hard to find one’s way about the book; the papers are not quite in random order, but neither are they logically grouped into various aspects of the subject. If this had been done, with subheadings in the contents list, the various aspects of the metastatic process, and current research in understanding mechanisms and therapy, would have been made clearer, certainly to any newcomer to the field. Although an early chapter by Hewitt emphasizes the inadequacies of animal tumours as relevant models for tumour disease, too many of the following papers deal with just such models, and the clinical papers are in the minority.

Much of the work described in this book has been, or will be, published elsewhere, and it really will be of little value to workers already in the field. To other basic or clinical scientists becoming interested in the metastatic process, I doubt that such a collection of papers is the best approach to the subject.

M. V. Pimm

The Breast. Eds H. S. Gallagher, H. P. Lewis, R. K. Snyderman & J. A. Urban (1978) Missouri: C. V. Mosby Co. 564 pp. Price not given.

This book, with its 43 authors (all from the U.S.A.) and 45 chapters, covers all aspects of the breast and its diseases. The subject matter includes anatomy, physiology, pathology, diagnosis, treatment, operative technique, plastic surgery and psychology. Inevitably it invites comparison with Haagensen’s “Diseases of the Breast”, and inevitably it suffers in comparison, by lacking a consistent or integrated viewpoint. In their preface the Editors admit that this is so, saying: “no attempt has been made to avoid disagreement or to exclude viewpoints other than our own”. Unfortunately it also appears true that no attempt has been made to insist that authors present their subject in a balanced manner. Thus, in Chapter 6 by Professor Gallagher on the classification of breast neoplasms, no mention is made of the WHO classification, though there is room to quote 4 papers on that great rarity, adenoid cystic carcinoma of the breast. Indeed, in this Chapter the only system of classification acknowledged is the author’s own, and this parochialism is only slightly redressed in Chapter 14 by Robbins (a surgeon) who appears to favour the use of the WHO system.

The imbalanced chapters on pathology is also seen in other sections. For example, on p. 88, 10 references are quoted in support of the observation that the breasts are accessible organs and that their examination is relatively easy; a trivial point, perhaps, but symptomatic of the rather pedantic approach to be found in some sections.

This book is an attempt to present a modern review of breast disease, which is a worthwhile project. Many of its chapters are successful, but some are not, suffering both from bias and pedestrianism. Should a second edition be contemplated, the Editors would do well to be firm with themselves and their contributors, and to insist on a more scholarly approach. Menawhile, whilst major libraries will no doubt feel obliged to purchase