excellent summary of the more common tumours presenting to the surgeon and their appropriate form of management. Whilst not aiming to give the surgical detail of a Wipple resection, some very useful key points to bear in mind whilst undertaking this demanding operation are stressed. I was surprised to read the recommendation of temporary biliary drainage prior to undertaking this operation in jaundiced patients, as there is no evidence to recommend this practice routinely. Endocrine and cystic tumours of the pancreas and gall bladder carcinoma are not covered.

The management of gastric cancer is well summarised including the results of recent chemotherapy trials, but the detailed surgical techniques and their indications were by necessity omitted. Colorectal cancer surgery has traditionally been the domain of all general surgeons, but with the advent of pouch surgery and more sphincter-preserving operations has come an even greater need for specialist colorectal surgeons. The issue of population screening for colorectal cancer is well covered, as is the detection of liver metastases, although I disagreed with the recommendation that their presence or absence should be established pre-operatively in all cases. The surgical treatment of carcinoma of the rectum is given a separate section although there is no mention of transanal excision, resection or irradiation and carcinoma of the anal canal is not discussed. The management of hepatic metastases from colorectal cancer is controversial with the place of surgical resection, regional and systemic chemother- apy uncertain; unfortunately the section devoted to it does not clarify this contentious subject.

This book contains a good summary of the management of the more common endocrine tumours, but perhaps a section about the multiple endocrine neoplasia syndromes could have been included. The four chapters on urological oncology were of interest to me as a non-urologist, although possibly out of place in a book of this length and reading audience. Bone and soft tissue sarcomas are discussed together, with a bias towards the former which was not as one might expect in a book of this type. In the chapter on melanoma the importance of complete nodal clearance whenever this operation is performed for nodal disease is emphasised and whilst isolated limb perfusion is mentioned, there are no details of the technique or results of its use for recurrent disease.

It is in the management of breast cancer that the surgeon’s role as a member of a multi-disciplinary team is probably best exemplified and the chapter related to this section gives a good basic overview. There is little information about the enormous advances in molecular biology and the use of prognostic factors. Surprisingly, breast reconstruction and the management of locally advanced disease are not discussed. The final sections on the principles of cancer chemother- apy and recent advances in cancer research provided succinct informative reviews of these interesting topics.

In conclusion, it is difficult to define the market at which this book is aimed, although it does succeed in its aim of providing an up to date review of the topics covered. This book lacks the detail necessary for the consultant general surgeon and the surgeon or senior registrar with a special interest in oncology. It is, however, a useful overview for those preparing for the second part FRCS, but is not, as is claimed by the publishers, essential reading.

N.P.M. Sacks

Patterns of Cancer in Five Continents, IARC Scientific Publication No. 102, edited by S.L. Whelan, D.M. Parker and E. Masugger, Lyon: WHO, 1990, 162 pp. £25.00.

This slim volume is, in effect, the tabular part of the latest Cancer Incidence in Five Continents (Vol. 5) published in 1987 which incorporates incidence data from 36 countries, for all malignancies for the years 1978–82 or thereafter. The plethora of tabulation in this volume make it difficult to digest, even for epidemiologists. The present book attempts to rectify this by reducing the tabular data in a variety of ways. A series of bar charts of incidence by cancer site is organised in sequences of highest to lowest rates, pie charts by country and selected cancer sites are given and fuller age specific incidence graphs are shown by site by country.

There is a brief chapter giving explanation details — which is adequate — but no further words of comment or explanation are given in the text.

Graphical data always have an attraction way beyond their tabular counterparts and this volume is very appealing. Its systematic approach makes this an immensely useful volume to turn to and it should provide material for comment, investigation and teaching throughout the world.

There is very little to criticise — the user should beware of the caveats regarding the accuracy of the companion volume — in particular beware of over interpretation of data for some registries where small case numbers occur and where good census data are not always readily available. The diagrams occasionally become victims of their own logical scheme in that some of the pie diagrams do not shade consistently. Such comments are trivial compared with the overwhelming burden of good and interesting data, well presented in a clear fashion and understandable to all.

Atlas for US Cancer Mortality Among Non-Whites: 1950–1980. L.W. Pickle, T.J. Mason, N. Howard, R. Hoover and J.F. Fraumeni, Washington: NIH Publications, 1990, 186 pp.

In many ways this atlas is a far less satisfactory product than the previous work. It is also a companion volume to a previous publication — in this case an atlas on cancer mortality in US white populations. The authors are thus constrained by decisions made about that volume in the production of this one. Non-whites means the black, American and Asian members of the community. Numbers of the latter two groups are small and the data are dominated by the black population. The descriptive elements are not full or critical enough for the reader to acquire very much sense of the interpretability of the results. The geographic analysis is somewhat confused by the use of ‘state economic areas’ which are not fully explained in the text.

Perhaps the most useful parts of the results appear in the early pages where comparison of rates with whites are made followed by changes in the non-white rates with time. These reveal recent higher rates of male lung cancer in non-whites and the better known excesses of myeloma, prostate and oral cavity cancers in certain groups. Similarly there are lower rates of Hodgkin’s Disease and melanoma.

The maps — four for each sex by site — take some while to appreciate fully — giving rates for each of the 3 decades and a time trend. However, only the extremes of the distribution are coloured. Because the numbers of non-whites is not evenly distributed around the country, for me, this makes interpretation very difficult indeed. The authors draw attention to some aspects of the geography about which they are confident but it is difficult to see what else can be gleaned from this compilation.

This is thus very much a specialist volume — useful to certain epidemiologists, geographers and public health specialists in the US but it is unlikely to have much general appeal.

R.A. Cartwright

Cancer: Causes, Occurrence and Control (IARC Scientific Pubs. No. 100), edited by L. Tomatis (editor-in-chief), A. Aitio, N.E. Day, E. Heseltine, J. Kaldor, A.B. Miller, D.M. Parkin and E. Riboli, Lyon: IARC, 1990, 352 pp. £19.00.

Epidemiology and prevention together form the principal focus of the activities of the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the autonomous cancer research arm of WHO. It is appropriate therefore that it should have chosen