Book Reviews

Guide to Therapeutic Oncology. Eds D. R. BERGEVIN, J. BLOM & D. C. TORMEY (1979) Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins. 668 pp. $55.00.

This "Guide to Therapeutic Oncology" is one of a number of oncology text books published recently. It is intended to be a concise reference of the natural history, diagnostic evaluation, and treatment of tumours. The first section deals with the general principles of treatment of cancer with surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy. This is followed by a section devoted to a review of cancer chemotherapeutic agents. The 3rd and major section of the book deals with the management of various tumour groups.

Although entitled "Guide to Therapeutic Oncology" the emphasis is strongly on cancer chemotherapy, with little detail of surgery or radiotherapy. Surgeons will not be pleased to hear that their role is one of a primary physician, and as a "technician" on the physicians' team! The quality of the contributions vary as in any multi-author book, but the standard is generally high.

The text is well referenced, with a preference as one would expect, for the American literature. Oncology is such a fast-moving subject that this text book like all its competitors is out-of-date by the time it is published. This book can, however, be recommended as a chemotherapy guide to cancer therapy with some background to surgical and radiotherapeutic techniques.

J. H. SCARFFE

Radiation Oncology—Rationale, Technique, Results. Eds W. T. Moss, W. N. BRAND & H. BATTIFORA (1979) St Louis: C. V. Mosby. 648 pp. Price not given.

"Moss" has been an old friend for most radiotherapists over the years since it was first published in 1959 and the reviewer still remembers with pleasure his discovery of the book when a rather confused novice to the subject. The book, with 2 additional authors, is now in its 5th edition; a testimony to its value and the demand for its continued updating.

The book is not a comprehensive primer on radiation therapy, and it is not suitable for those who demand a didactic presentation of how to treat an individual patient. It is, however, an excellent integrated approach to the philosophies of management. Its great strength is its emphasis on the interaction of radiation therapy to the tumour with that on the host and his normal tissues. It is this balance between tumour and normal-tissue response in the patient which so frequently determines the outcome of treatment.

Unlike many modern books, this one remains unashamedly devoted to radiotherapy, with little discussion of other aspects of cancer treatment such as chemotherapy. It does, however, mention briefly the current role of combined treatments, wherever these are appropriate. It is not therefore a book which should be regarded as a detailed reference book. It is much more a first class introduction to the subject, which still presents its reader with unexpected gems on re-reading and sources for further study.

It is always possible to criticise small points in any book. Perhaps one might make a general comment that the reviewer continues to find it somewhat irritating that the emphasis is largely on North American radiotherapy. In particular, the continued use of the American Joint Committee for Cancer Staging Classification instead of the International U.I.C.C. system seems unnecessary. The authors acknowledge that their views have been selective and to some degree shaped by their prejudices. It is therefore churlish to be too critical about the selection of data and techniques.

This is an excellent book which should be on all radiotherapists' bookshelves.

N. M. BLEEKEN

Bladder Tumors and Other Topics in Urological Oncology. Eds M. PAVONEMACALUSO, P. H. SMITH & F. EDSMYR (1980) New York: Plenum Publishing Co. 528 pp. $59.50.

From the point of view of the surgeons, radiotherapists, oncologists and experimental pathologists involved in treatment of uro-
logical cancer, the meeting of which this book is the proceedings acted as an important focal point for the appraisal of current treatment and research, and provided a forum to discuss new directions for the future. Because of the large number of papers on various bladder-cancer topics (28 chapters on aspects of staging and experimental pathology, 17 on surgical treatment, 9 on radiotherapy, 23 on chemotherapy) most of the chapters are short data presentations, mostly new or an update of previously published work. Bladder cancer is a disease which is predominantly managed by surgeons. The chapters on the variety of surgical approaches possible are well presented, but the format of the chapters gives little chance for an overall appraisal of the relative merits of different approaches. Perhaps the most fundamental question raised was the relevance of lymph-node clearance at cystectomy. Although many European and American surgeons prefer the radical technique because it simplifies the access to remove the bladder, there is no data to demonstrate its superiority over simple cystectomy. The data reported from two Dutch groups in fact demonstrates that, as in carcinoma of the breast, the results from the simple operation are as good and suggest that there are less post-operative complications.

The papers on radiotherapy were not as extensive as on surgical aspects, but there are good contributions on the relative merits and pelvic complications from use of 6 MeV linear accelerator and Cobalt-60 therapy, demonstrating the normal-tissue-sparing effect from the former.

Chemotherapy for treatment of advanced bladder cancer is not new, but only recently has it become clear that this disease is as chemoresponsive to single-agent therapy as breast and head and neck tumours, justifying trials of adjuvant therapy. Two pilot studies with encouraging results are reported, but it will be several years before data is available from controlled trials.

Intravesical topical chemotherapy of superficial tumours has a long history, and although new information demonstrating activity of adriamycin and cis-platinum is presented, all agents tested to date have about the same level of activity. The lack of advantage of these new drugs over the cheaper, long-established agents Thiotepa and Epodyl, makes it unlikely that they will be first-line treatment.

Compared to the extensive data on bladder cancer in this book, there were only a few papers on cancer of the prostate (10, 4 of which dealt with aspects of hormone receptors) and 2 papers on testicular tumours. The most important of these papers is an update of information from the Veterans Administrative Prostatic Cancer trials, which have caused considerable controversy in the U.S.A. by suggesting that there is no place for radical surgery or early adjuvant endocrine manipulation in this disease.

Although this book will probably be of greatest value to surgeons in training or involved in clinical research in urological tumours, the fund of information and references will be of considerable interest to radiotherapists and oncologists needing an introduction to the treatment of urological cancer.

R. J. D. Oliver

Fast Neutrons in the Treatment of Cancer. M. Catterall & D. K. Bewley (1979) London: Academic Press. 394 pp. £22.40.

The cyclotron at the MRC Cyclotron Unit at Hammersmith Hospital in London has now been in use for 25 years, as a source of radioisotopes for research and clinical use, as a research tool for radiobiologists and as a neutron source for radiotherapy. This book gives an account of the pioneering work of the Hammersmith team in developing the physical and biological background for neutron therapy, and the subsequent 10 years of clinical experience and clinical trials.

The first 3 chapters, on the discovery of the neutron and the development of the medical cyclotron, the production of neutron beams, and the interaction of neutrons with matter; dosimetry; depth-dose, give a wide-ranging review of these basic topics with adequate references to the new extensive literature. Chapter 4, on radiobiological aspects of neutron therapy, gives an account of the basic radiobiology of fast neutrons, and develops the biological arguments which justify clinical experiments on the use of fast neutrons for the treatment of cancer. Quite properly, the emphasis in these chapters is on the work done at Hammersmith Hospital, as this has provided the basic data on which