Book notices

Aerosols and the lung. Clinical and Experimental Aspects. SW Clarke and D Pavia. (Pp 275; £32.) London: Butterworth & Co Ltd. 1984.

This is an interesting and surprisingly comprehensive compilation from nine contributors, which reviews deposition, fate, and effects of a variety of aerosols when inhaled into the lungs. A good deal of basic pulmonary physiology is relevant (much of it discovered recently using inhaled radiolabelled aerosols), and the book encompasses a much wider field than its title might suggest. The interrelation between aerosol characteristics, deposition and clearance, pulmonary secretions, and disease are well discussed, and the supporting references are impressively thorough and recent. Specific contributions include a review of the relative effectiveness of cough and physiotherapy determined by studies with radiolabelled aerosols; a discussion of therapeutic applications, and a description of the use of aerosols for inhalation provocation tests in the investigation of asthma (especially occupational) and alveolitis.

Much of the material may be beyond the immediate need (and some of it beyond the comprehension) of many clinicians, and for them (us) this book will be a valuable source of reference. For those with more specialised interest, it will command considerable respect as a comprehensive review of the State of the Art.—DJH

Pathology of the Lung, Volumes 1 and 2, 4th edition. H Spencer. (Pp 1176; £125.00; $200.00) Oxford: Pergammon Press Ltd. 1984.

Professor Spencer's book has been the standard reference work on the pathology of the lung since it first appeared over two decades ago, and well-thumbed copies of previous editions will be found in most laboratories. This edition uses the same chapter headings as before, but the text has been modified to cover recent developments, and the references have been up-dated. The first volume contains 14 chapters, dealing with normal anatomy and congenital defects, diseases due to microorganisms, pneumoconiosis, radiation injuries, pulmonary collapse and emphysema. The infective conditions covered range from exotica such as pulmonary dirofilariasis and paracoccidioidomycosis to pneumococcal pneumonia and influenza. Several new diseases, including Legionella pneumonitis, are included. Tuberculosis was omitted from earlier editions because it had been so thoroughly described elsewhere. Its inclusion here is particularly welcome since it is now becoming something of a diagnostic blind spot. In the second volume there are ten chapters, five of which are devoted to tumours. The section on chronic pulmonary hypertension has been expanded, and benign lymphocytic angeitis and the toxic oil syndrome have been added to "Pulmonary Diseases of Uncertain Aetiology".

It is an enormous undertaking for one person to write a book of this nature. Inevitably there are minor points that could be criticised, and not everyone would agree with some of the opinions expressed. But it would be invidious to pick holes. "Pathology of the Lung" is an outstanding piece of work, displaying a level of scholarship and enthusiasm on the part of the author which must be unique. Professor Spencer is to be congratulated once again.—CWE

Notice

Clinical respiratory physiology

A course entitled respiratory physiology will be held at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital from 17 to 21 March 1986. The emphasis will be on practical applications and laboratory work. Visiting speakers include J Butler (Seattle), RH Ingram (Boston), and NL Jones (Hamilton). Application forms and further details may be obtained from: Dr JMB Hughes or Dr NB Pride, School Office (SSC), Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital, London W12 0HS (01 743 2030, ext 351).