to explain excessive sleepiness in a patient with normal respiratory recordings. The book is well illustrated and draws extensively on the Oxford experience. There are remarkably few typographical errors and the interested reader will find that most statements are at least justified from within the extensive and up to date bibliography. Inevitably there are going to be some points of disagreement in emphasis and I still find it odd to be reading about the epidemiology of a condition 158 pages after it is first described. Likewise, it may be necessary to vary the personal pronoun when the book is revised, since the statement that this is a condition 15–20 times more common in men than in women is no longer believed to be true. This is an excellent text book which should be available in all general hospital libraries and also in any laboratory where patients with sleep and breathing disorders are being studied. It is a feeling of some frustration to me (but not the author) that we had already purchased two copies of this book before I received the complimentary reviewer's copy from *Thorax!* – PMAC.

Cystic Fibrosis: Current Topics. Volume 2. J A Dodge, D J H Brock, J H Widdicombe. (Pp 368; £60.00/$90.00). Chichester, UK: John Wiley, 1994. 0 471 95166 8.

Scientific research into cystic fibrosis continues to move forward at an enormous pace. On the medical front multidisciplinary care, both at a paediatric and adult level, is producing increased survival. These benefits in medical care are counterbalanced by an explosion of scientific knowledge at the level of molecular genetics and applied cell biology. The authors have planned these editions of current topics to keep pace with this rapid development of knowledge. They plan to publish every two years and the topics will be set at the cutting edge of cystic fibrosis.

This edition is divided into three separate components: genetics, cell biology, and clinical aspects. The chapters on genetics and cell biology are of considerable interest to the cystic fibrosis specialist, either medical or scientist. As the authors comment in their introduction, the borders between genetics, cell biology, and clinical medicine are becoming increasingly blurred. Eventually, when the science of cystic fibrosis is translated into therapy, it will be increasingly important for clinicians and for those involved in the care of patients with cystic fibrosis to understand these topics in some detail. The authors take a balanced approach to the science of cystic fibrosis in suggesting that gene therapy will not necessarily cure cystic fibrosis; however, if, for example, the cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator can be manipulated to alter chloride channel impermeability there may be a way forward for novel pharmacological treatments of this lethal disease.

The first five chapters cover up to date knowledge of the genetics of cystic fibrosis. Comprehensively discussed are mouse models, gene therapy, splicing of the *CFTR* gene, postnatal and prenatal selection in cystic fibrosis, and heterozygote screening. The chapters contain enormous detail and require concentration and a furrowed brow to get to grips with them, but this is not to underestimate their importance.

The second part of the book deals with the cell biology of cystic fibrosis and it is in this area where science is most likely to be of benefit and to be translated eventually into specific medical therapy. Pharmaceutical companies have already perceived this potential benefit and are investing considerable amounts of money into these areas of research.

The third part of the book deals with some of the clinical aspects of cystic fibrosis and includes chapters on the role of cytokines in cystic fibrosis, double lung transplantation, the prevention of liver disease, energy requirements, and the evolution of pancreatic disease. The chapter on transplantation demonstrates that double lung transplantation has now become the operation of choice rather than heart-lung transplantation in most centres. Also, as patients are growing older liver disease may become more prominent; eventually this organ may also need to be transplanted thus increasing the requirement for triple transplantation.

This book is essential reading for everyone with a specialist interest in cystic fibrosis and is a reasonable financial return for the wealth of information and references contained within it. The general respiratory physician would probably not wish to purchase this book but would certainly like to have access to it from a friendly cystic fibrosis specialist or to read a copy purchased by the postgraduate library. – AKW

High Altitude Medicine and Physiology. 2nd Edition. M P Ward, J S Milledge, J B West. (Pp 618; £69.00.) London: Chapman and Hall, 1994. 0 412 34610 8.

In its 618 pages this book authoritatively covers the main issues of man at high altitude. The authors are themselves all physicians, researchers, and climbers, each with a well documented personal interest in high altitude. The fact that all 31 chapters are written by the three authors themselves lends a cohesiveness of material and a uniformity of writing style not found when authorship is more widely spread. Although the first edition was an excellent contribution to the field, the second edition is considerably more current and comprehensive. The table of contents is well organised and following it are four useful conversion tables. The 24 pages of index make the volume handy for reference.

The initial chapters on altitude history and on the atmosphere are particularly well done. The former provides a table for historical overview and describes the high elevations of the world. In the latter the reader learns that barometric pressure varies with latitude and season, and that pressure at a terrestrial elevation is usually higher than that calculated for the standard atmosphere – all relevant facts for expeditionary climbers.

Approximately one third of the book is appropriately dedicated to the basic scientific aspects of oxygen transport and gas exchange under conditions of low barometric pressure. Here the reader finds well illustrated, concise expositions of the basic concepts as well as the actual changes over time in measurements related to ventilation, pulmonary diffusion, heart, pulmonary circulation, arterial pressure, blood composition, acid-base balance, peripheral tissue delivery, sleep, nutrition, endocrine and renal systems, and the central nervous system. Deficiencies, when they occur (sympathetic nervous system, metabolic fuels during exercise, pH at extreme altitude, altitude effects in women), are minor compared with the excellent, clear discussions of the great mass of information in a rapidly expanding field.

The inclusion in the text of illnesses and accidents at altitude, including cold injuries, indicates the comprehensive coverage of altitude by the authors and these chapters will be of particular interest to climbers and expeditions.

This is an excellent book which stands as a landmark in the field and will be of interest to medical students and practising physicians, to the occasional climber and the expedition leader, to the interested layman and the medical and physiological researcher. Because oxygen lack is a primitive and fundamental stress, it elicits cellular and integrative responses from every organ system. This authoritative text can easily reside in the libraries of biologists and outdoors enthusiasts everywhere. – JTR

NOTICES

Lung Pathology

A course on lung pathology will be held at the National Heart and Lung Institute, London from 31 October to 3 November 1995. For further information contact: Professor B Corrin, Histopathology, Royal Brompton Hospital, London SW3 6NP. Fax: +44 171 351 8435.

1st Congress of Surgery of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The 1st Congress of Surgery of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be held in Sarajevo on 8–11 October 1995. The scientific programme will include papers by distinguished specialists from all over the world on the surgery of injuries and diseases in war, surgical infections and the organisation of surgery in war. For further information contact Professor Hasan Piranić, Stjepana Tomica bb, 71000 Sarajevo. Telephone +387 71 644 696. Fax: +387 71 471 976 or Dr M Sabulic at The Embassy of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Republic of Croatia, Pantovscak 96, 41000 Zagreb. Telephone: +385 41 429 831 or +385 41 429 836. Fax: +385 41 441 899.