

A Colour Atlas of Sputum Cytology. The Early Diagnosis of Lung Cancer. G Canti. (Pp 182; £30.) London: Wolfe, 1988. ISBN 0 7234 0916 1.

Gordon Canti's immense experience and expertise in diagnosing lung cancer from the cytological examination of sputum has been very successfully captured in this remarkable monograph. The author set out to describe, very simply, the diagnostic dilemmas facing the cytopathologist interpreting sputum cytology. The reader is guided to the correct diagnosis with a large number of carefully selected and well reproduced illustrations. Unlike many textbooks, this book has illustrations that concentrate on difficult areas of diagnosis rather than depicting classical examples, which are usually so much more frequent in textbooks than in real life. The book is designed for practising cytopathologists, and would be equally helpful as a bench book for MLSOs, cytoscreeners, or pathologists. It would also be valuable for the increasing number of clinicians who are attempting to interpret the cellular components of bronchiolar-alveolar lavage material. Although it concentrates on the exfoliated cells seen in sputum, some reference is made to lavage and brushings, particularly where this is relevant to the interpretation of the cytological appearances of the sputum. This book clearly shows how much information can be obtained by careful examination of material obtained by a totally non-invasive procedure. With the increasing use of transbronchial biopsy, bronchiolar-alveolar lavage, and percutaneous needle biopsy it is easy to underestimate the value of this cheap and simple test. It is difficult to compare this with other books on the subject, because it is very much a personal view rather than a classical textbook. It is in no way a general reference book, and conspicuously does not reference other people's work. At first this seems an enormous disadvantage and could reasonably be criticised, but when one is reading the book it does not seem to matter. There are other reference books, particularly Jennifer Young's excellent colour atlas covering all aspects of pulmonary cytopathology, which provide extensive reviews of published work. In his book Gordon Canti has concentrated on giving us the benefit of his own experience, and has produced a book that deserves to be on the shelf of any practising cytologist.—AH

A Diagnostic Approach to Chest Diseases. 3rd ed. Glen A Lillington. (Pp 530; £73.) Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1987.

This is the third edition of a book that aims to provide a practical guide to decision making in the diagnosis and management of pulmonary disease. Unlike most textbooks, in which each chapter describes a disease entity or group of related diseases in detail, the approach is to try to simulate diagnostic problems as they present in clinical practice. Most of the chapters cover the differential diagnosis of individual radiographic patterns of pulmonary disease, reflecting the pivotal role that radiology plays in the diagnosis of pulmonary disorders. The book is written lucidly, and the reproduction of chest radiographs is generally of a high standard. Although the book is basically an index of differential diagnosis, each pulmonary disease is discussed in sufficient

detail to make it a handy reference book and each chapter ends with an extensive list of references grouped under topical headings. Inevitably some pulmonary disorders appear as part of the differential diagnosis of several radiographic patterns and hence the information pertinent to such disorders is not conveniently compiled in one place. The index is comprehensively cross referenced, though it does not identify the major reference to each disease entity and this is a minor disadvantage. Although the book inevitably has a North American "flavour" and its Californian origins are occasionally betrayed by the prominence with which pulmonary mycoses appear in the differential diagnoses, most chapters contain a very useful differential diagnosis and guide to subsequent management well suited to British practice. Dr Lillington is to be congratulated on succeeding in his aim of producing a well written, problem orientated textbook that has a sensible practical approach to diagnostic management of respiratory disease.

Bronchoalveolar Mast Cells and Asthma. K C Flint. (Pp 84; £36.) Berlin: Springer, 1987. ISBN 3-540-17489-3.

The Bloomsburg Series in Clinical Science comprises a series of monographs that aim to present topical accounts of scientific interest relevant to clinical practice. This volume represents the seventh in the series and concerns itself with the functional significance of mast cells lavaged from the human respiratory tract. Essentially the volume describes the background to and experimental work on these mast cells undertaken by Kevin Flint before his fatal accident in 1986. In collaboration with colleagues from the Middlesex Hospital and University College London, Dr Flint accomplished a vast amount of useful experimental work on these cells which is brought together in this volume. The first two chapters are introductions to the role of the mast cell in human allergic diseases and the newer concept of mast cell heterogeneity. The following three chapters concisely describe a series of experiments that highlight the putative role of the mast cell as a mediator secretory cell in bronchial asthma. Consideration is given to the lavage technique; mast cell numbers in various diseases, including asthma; assessment of histamine release by an IgE dependent mechanism; and the inhibitory actions of various drugs commonly used in the treatment of asthma. Chapter 5 is a particularly good review of the role of mast cells in exercise induced asthma and contains unique results on hyperosmolarity as a stimulus for mediator secretion relevant to exercise induced asthma. The penultimate chapter deals with the newly formed mediators such as prostaglandin D₂, leukotrienes and platelet activating factor, as important mast cell products contributing to disordered airway physiology in asthma. The final chapter brings together comparative numerical and functional studies on luminal mast cells in atopic and non-atopic (intrinsic) asthma. This small book contains a considerable amount of original information. It is easy to read and will be of particular use to those interested in the immunopharmacology of asthma. The book is a credit to Kevin Flint's enthusiasm and dedication to his research, but in view of the specialised nature of the topic covered and the relatively high cost its appeal is likely to be restricted.