

Book Reviews

Histological Typing of tumours of the Central Nervous System. K. J. ZÜLCH (1980). Geneva: W.H.O. 66 pp. Sw Fr. 49.

This is No. 21 of the volumes of the WHO International Histological Classification of Tumours. Previous volumes have been reviewed in this journal, and interested readers will be familiar with the aims and achievements of this valuable series.

Tumours of the central nervous system have always formed a difficult field of study, divorced from the main corpus of tumour pathology, and shrouded in a mystique which neuropathologists have not always seemed eager to dissipate. But the general principles of tumour classification are as applicable within the CNS as elsewhere, and in recent years less intimidating classifications of CNS tumours have appeared. The present volume follows this more down-to-earth trend, and offers a relatively simple scheme. Each tumour type is briefly described, and illustrated by excellent and apposite colour photomicrographs. The dedicated neuropathologist may find points to criticise, but the "occasional" histopathologist, faced with an intracranial neoplasm, will not go far wrong if he follows this guide. It can also be recommended as a reference book for neurosurgeons and oncologists.

O. G. DODGE

Tumours of the Pancreas. A. R. MOOSSA (1981). Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins. 560 pp.

People who issue optimistic statements about the progress of the "fight against cancer" might do well to ponder a while on cancer of the pancreas.

It is calculated that there are 22,000 new cases of pancreatic cancer per year in the United States. Over 90% of these are adenocarcinomas arising in the pancreatic duct system, and for this tumour the overall survival is about 10% one year from diagnosis, and 2% or less at 5 years.

Because of the deep central location of the pancreas, the exocrine pancreatic tumours produce only vague clinical signs in their early stages. By the time that tumour has

involved the common bile duct and produced obstructive jaundice, it has spread beyond the possibility of surgical resection, though palliative short-circuit procedures may still be feasible. Radiotherapy has not been successful in this field, and so far the results of chemotherapy have been disappointing. Earlier diagnosis offers the only possible way to improve this grim situation, and the keys to this are, as the authors truly state, (1) early suspicion and (2) immediate access to diagnostic programmes. The core of this book, whose authors are mainly from the University of Chicago, is a critical assessment of the diagnostic procedures currently available for the diagnosis of pancreatic tumours. These include conventional radiography, isotope scanning, ultrasonography, computed tomography, endoscopic pancreatography, angiography, function tests, and tumour-marker studies. The techniques, usefulness and drawbacks of these are all well described. Framing these central chapters are good brief reviews of pancreatic anatomy and physiology, surgical procedures, and (strike a more hopeful note) the clinical features and surgery of the endocrine pancreatic tumours.

All this will be of interest and value to the surgeons and gastro-enterologists, for whom the book is clearly intended. But there is also a long review chapter on experimental tumours of the pancreas, devoted to nitrosamine-induced carcinomas in the golden hamster. This seems to be addressed to a totally different readership from the rest of the book, and might more usefully have appeared in one of the reviews of experimental cancer. Those who wish to have this information are unlikely to be much interested in the other chapters of this book, and vice versa.

O. G. DODGE

Immunodeficient Animals for Cancer Research. S. SPARROW (1980). London: Macmillan. 245 pp. £20.

This book is fairly small, but very readable. From its title, it is not clear whether it is meant to be laboratory manual or a reference work, and unfortunately it lies somewhere uneasily between. The introduction by Davies is very balanced, and could well have been extended beyond its 4 pages. Chapter 2 on