

## BOOK REVIEWS

**International Histological Classification of Tumours: No. 2: Histological Typing of Breast Tumours, 2nd Edition World Health Organization, Geneva, 1981. 73 pp. illustrated ISBN 924 17661024 Sw. Fr. 37, Book only**

This book on Histological typing of Breast Tumours is one of a series of 25 volumes containing proposed nomenclatures, definitions and classifications together with descriptive notes of various histological types of breast tumours.

In order to keep the classification up to date and to revise the earlier edition a WHO meeting was held in 1978. An editorial committee of 13 experts was formed to prepare and select illustrations for the preparation of this book.

In this edition in addition to histological classification, morphology code numbers of the International Classification of Diseases for Oncology (ICD-O) for tumours, and the Systematised Nomenclature of Medicine (SNOMED) for tumour-like lesions are included. This will ensure uniformity of coding for data utilisation in the future.

There are 90 illustrations, all of which are photomicrographs. The explanatory notes are clear, comprehensive and provide more detail than in the previous edition. An index provided for reference to the illustrations is a valuable addition.

In the present edition, non-invasive carcinoma is described under separate headings of intraductal and lobular carcinoma-in-situ. This is consistent with the contemporary views as the latter is now a well recognised entity. There has been an effort to include other new histologic concepts in the classification. There is scope for improvement in the quality of the photomicrographs which have an excess of a bluish hue. Special stains when used are not readily discernible and it would be an advantage to indicate the type of special stain where applicable. This book should serve as a useful guide to postgraduate students in surgical pathology of the breast.

*S. SIVANESAN*

**Zimmerman L E and Sobin L H (1980). International Histological Classification of Tumours, No. 24: Histological typing of tumours of the eye and its adnexa, World Health Organisation, Geneva, 82 pages, Book and set of 150 colour transparencies, Sw. fr. 210, Book only Sw. fr 60.**

This volume deals with tumours arising from the eyelid, conjunctiva and cornea, lacrimal gland, lacrimal drainage system, orbit and intraocular tissues. The classification is based primarily on the microscopic characteristics of the tumours as seen with conventional light microscopy. Particular emphasis is given to the definition and illustration of melanotic tumours. Numerous tumour-like lesions are dealt with in the classification and are illustrated because of their importance in differential diagnosis and because of the unclear borderline between neoplasms and certain non-neoplastic lesions. A section on the phakomatoses is included because of their relevance to ophthalmology. The classification summaries are a valuable aid in differential diagnosis and should be particularly appreciated by the general histopathologist who only infrequently encounters tumours of the eye and its adnexa.

This publication deals with a much broader spectrum of neoplasms than the other WHO volumes in this series resulting in considerable overlap with tumours of the skin, central nervous system, salivary glands, haemopoietic and lymphoid tissues, soft tissues and bone. However, unlike some of the earlier volumes, the authors have followed the WHO classifications dealing with these areas. There are concise definitions of terms adopted with brief but informative explanatory notes, and 150 colour photomicrographs which are also available as a valuable collection of colour transparencies.

This is an invaluable publication and should be available as a source of reference to undergraduates and postgraduates alike, but especially to every pathologist, ophthalmologist, neurologist and neurosurgeon.

*K. PRATHAP*

WILLIAMS E D, SEIBENMANN R E, SOBIN L H, *et al.*, (1980), INTERNATIONAL HISTOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF TUMOURS, NO. 23.

Histological typing of endocrine tumours, World Health Organisation, Geneva, 69 pages, Book and set of 146 colour transparencies, Sw. fr 204, Book only Sw. fr 58.

This is the 23rd monograph in the WHO series on the International Histological Classification of Tumours. Publications in this series are intended to promote the adoption of a uniform terminology in the field of cancer and to stimulate comparative studies on the incidence of various tumours, their natural history and response to treatment. Some of the earlier monographs have partly achieved this objective, but those on the breast, lung and lymphoreticular neoplasms have had only limited success.

The present monograph deals with tumours of the anterior pituitary, adrenal cortex, adrenal medulla and extraadrenal paraganglionic structures, parathyroid glands, diffuse endocrine system and endocrine pancreas. Thyroid tumours are not covered as these have been the subject of an earlier monograph. The volume is illustrated with 146 colour photomicrographs which are also available as a collection of colour transparencies. In general, the illustrations are adequate although there is some variation both in discernable detail and in their tinctorial quality.

The formulation of a standardised nomenclature and classification of tumours, acceptable alike to physicians, surgeons, radiologists, pathologists and statisticians is difficult, particularly when intended for use in different countries and institutions with varying levels of expertise and technological sophistication. This is especially the case with endocrine neoplasms, where in many instances, the cell types can be determined only by a combination of special stains, immunohistochemical investigation and electron microscopy. A classification based on these methods cannot at present be widely applied. The proposed classification is therefore essentially morphological, based on cell types and histological patterns identifiable with conventional light microscopy. In view of the importance of the secretory activity of endocrine tumours, the authors recommend that the morphological classification should be supplemented by information on the functional activity of the tumour.

Although modifications are likely to be needed as experience accumulates, pathologists and others interested in endocrine pathology should try to use the proposed nomenclature and classification. This book should be available in every histopathology

department, in hospital libraries, and in departments of medicine, surgery, radiology and radiotherapy.

K. PRATHAP

Technical Report Series No 665. Neuronal aging & its implications in human neurological pathology. Report of a WHO study group. WHO Geneva, 1981. 88 p.p.

The desire to live long and remain young is as old as the history of mankind. As the average life-span of man continues to increase and according to one estimate the elderly may occupy 50 percent of hospital beds and 75 percent of physician's time within the next half century, the importance and timeliness of research in the biology of aging is vital to the state and society in both industrialized and developing countries. Where trends lead to older population, the burden of physiological dysfunctions and chronic neurological disorders also arises. Fortunately, in recent years research in aging and age-related disorders have vastly expanded and investigators are beginning to unravel some of its incredible mysteries. The objectives of these investigations, which are directed not only to extension of life but also to enhancement of the quality of life of the aged should, however, be clearly defined.

Since man is born with nearly full complement of neurons; he lives with them all his life and no new neurons are added to his nervous system thereafter, age-related disorders are expected to be dominated by disturbances in the neuronal functions, manifestations of which could be seen in the subtle behavioural and intellectual decline of the elderly. How to control the aging process to provide adequate adjustments in old age to a rapidly changing environment is the crux of the problem. In this regard, WHO Technical Report Series 665 on neuronal aging and its implications in human neurological pathology is significant and timely. It is staggering to note how much knowledge, wisdom and substance have been packed into this monograph of a mere 85 pages, which provides an in-depth overview incorporating recent advances of the biological phenomenon of aging. Chapters cover the whole spectrum of morphological, physiological, biochemical, pathological, clinical, social and behavioural aspects of the aging human organism. The report compiled by a group of neuroscientists, reviews with trenchant critique much of the currently available information in this

field and provides a multidisciplinary approach to the changes observed in the brain associated with senescence. Cytological alterations seen in various elements of the nervous tissue, like loss of cortical neurons, dendrites and dendritic spines, presence of neurofibrillary tangles and senile plaques in perikarya, disturbances in the neuron-glia relationship, accumulation of lipofuscin and many other features in the absence of obvious arteriosclerotic changes, could be the primary events associated with aging. Nevertheless, so many factors, from molecular to macroscopic levels are involved, that it is difficult to discern these changes as manifestations of a normal physiological process of aging. Neurofibrillary tangles and senile plaques of Alzheimer Type have recently been reported in non-demented individuals at a presenile age (Ulrich, 1982.) Loss of genetic stability, faults in neurotransmitter and alterations in external and internal environment could be other factors responsible in neurological aging.

The three major disorders of the nervous system in old age are stroke, Parkinson disease and senile dementia. According to the report senile dementia of Alzheimer Type accounts for 50-60 percent of cases, multi-infarct dementia for 15 percent and mixed dementia for another 10 percent of cases among those aged 65 years and above. The diagnosis of these 'senile' and 'secondary' dementia is absolutely essential. Attempts have been made to treat some of these conditions with surgical intervention and/or drugs. A brief review on this aspect of neurological disorders is included in the report. The highlight of this report, in my view, is the recommendations for effective and suitable measures to be taken to promote prevention and cure of neuronal aging disorders, which could reach menacing proportion in the next century.

The report puts forward perspectives for all research workers and scientists working in this field and contains a comprehensive list of more than 300 references.

*M A KARIM*

World Health Organisation (1982). WHO Expert Committee on Biological Standardization. Thirty-second Report. Tech. Rep. Ser. 673, W.H.O., Geneva, 1982.

This publication is the thirty-second report of the WHO Expert Committee on Biological Standardization which met in September, 1981. It

reiterates the importance of establishing standard preparations that are crucial to the quality control of biologicals throughout the world. Since 1935 the programme has continually gained momentum and today more than 12,000 ampoules of standards and reference preparations are distributed to over 85 countries each year. The present report gives its attention largely to matters affecting the increasing demand for, and the availability of, such preparations. One item of discussion is the fact that many countries receiving the standards have been unable to establish national standards and have wished to use the international preparations to carry out routine tests. A suggested solution is the establishment of regional cooperative working standards for groups of countries in neighbouring geographical locations. This would be more economical as the burden would then be shared. The committee also discussed other matters such as the need for reconstitution and use of standards, the assignment of units of activity, the importance of electrolytes in standards for clinical chemistry and a revision of the codes used in antibiotic discs for antibiotic susceptibility tests. Improvements in the polio vaccine is also discussed as well as the requirements for Rift Valley fever vaccine and the stability of measles vaccine. Satisfactory reagents have not been produced as standards for pyrogen testing and consideration has also to be given to preparing standards for the new biologicals now being produced by hybridoma and recombinant DNA technology. The rest of the report comprehensively discusses the various standards now available in the following fields: antibiotics, antibodies, antigens, blood products, endocrinological reagents and various reference reagents. All in all a very useful booklet for any diagnostic laboratory.

*T. PANG*

#### **RENAL MEDICINE**

Gabriel R (1981) *Renal Medicine*, Bailliere Tindall, London.

Many texts on Nephrology have been written but few are intended for the undergraduate medical student who is often confused and bewildered by the rapid advances made in this field over the last two decades. "Renal Medicine" by Dr. Roger Gabriel has, therefore, been very well received since its first publication in 1977. It has been recently updated in a second edition.

Written along similar lines as his earlier

"Postgraduate Nephrology", but in a more simple and readable form, this book is intended "to describe and explain renal medicine for students from the first clinical year to their qualifying examination." Coverage is their understandably superficial but the various chapters are succinctly written and should be easily understood.

The first chapter briefly introduces Nephrology as a clinical discipline. The next five chapters provide the fundamental information essential for the understanding of clinical Nephrology. Basic renal anatomy, physiology and immunology are simply but adequately explained.

Perhaps more depth could have been given to the discussion of disturbances of micturition and, in particular, proteinuria and haematuria. Most medical graduates will become general practitioners and primary physicians to whom patients with proteinuria or haematuria will present. In this light, too, the techniques and importance of urinalysis and microscopic examination should be stressed.

Subsequent chapters introduce the scope of clinical nephrology including dialysis and transplantation, to the student. Common conditions are quite adequately described though Renal Calculi could have been given more emphasis. One disadvantage in such a text is the tendency to oversimplify controversial issues, particularly evident in many aspects of Glomerulonephritis. Accuracies have to be sacrificed, perhaps, in order that certain basic information is conveyed to students uninitiated in the subject.

This concise text is highly recommended to the medical student seeking an introduction to clinical nephrology. Post-graduate students preparing for the membership examination will also find it useful, especially the chapter on immunology as well as those on dialysis and transplantation.

*C. T CHUA*

**International Histological Classification of Tumours No 1  
Histological Typing of Lung Tumours**

Edited by L. Kreyberg & others, World Health Organisation  
Geneva, 1981, 36 pgs; Book only Sw. Fr. 22

This latest volume on lung tumours is the 2nd edition of the earlier publication. It outlines and defines the present classification of lung tumours,

and represents the views of a committee of consultant pathologists from 14 countries who met in Geneva, in 1977.

The monograph outlines the general principles of tumour typing, and a formal classification of lung tumours based on microscopic appearance of hematoxylin-eosin stained specimens. The volume covers tumours of epithelial origin, soft tissues, neurothelium and a miscellaneous group. Included also is a discussion of tumour-like lesions, which is coded according to the Systematic Nomenclature of Medicine (SNOMED). The inclusion of this latter group is salutary for it deals with conditions likely to be confused with neoplasia.

The accompanying notes and descriptive details are clear and informative. The text is complemented by a fine selection of 56 colour micrographs illustrating the various conditions listed.

Recent advances in the study of pulmonary tumours using sophisticated techniques - including electronmicroscopy, histochemistry and tissue culture techniques no doubt provide valuable insight into the histogenesis and differentiation of lung tumours. However, the present classification based on light microscopic appearances is not to be slighted at all; several independent studies have exemplified the applicability, reliability and reproducibility of this classification and the fact that there is close correlation regarding the tumour type between the biopsy specimen, the surgical specimen and lymph node metastases.

This book may well prove invaluable not only to histopathologists, but to all workers in the field of pulmonary diseases.

*R. PATHMANATHAN*

MOSTOFI F K, SESTERHENN I A AND SOBIN L H  
(1981).

International Classification of Tumours, No. 25: Histological typing of kidney tumours, World Health Organisation, Geneva, 26 pages, Book and set of 92 colour transparencies, Sw. fr. 37.

This 25th volume is a short one and is restricted to tumours of the kidney. As in previous publications in this series, the classification is based on the morphologically identifiable cell types and histological patterns as seen with conventional light microscopy. As usual the text is succinct and the 92

illustrations are usefully representative. The latter, which are also available as a collection of colour transparencies, are invaluable for teaching purposes.

The publications in this series are not intended to serve as textbooks but rather to promote the adoption of a uniform terminology that will facilitate communication among scientists working in the field of cancer and stimulate comparative studies on the incidence of various tumours, their natural history and response to treatment.

*K. PRATHAP*

Organization, this volume of the International Pharmacopoeia provides practical guidelines for drug quality control. Unlike other pharmacopoeias, the drugs listed in the International Pharmacopoeia are drugs commonly used in therapeutics. The quality specifications demand for each of the listed drugs are exacting and so they should be, for we cannot afford to have any compromise on drug quality. The pharmacists, pharmacologists, drug industries and analytical chemists would find the laboratory procedures set out for the quality control practical and would certainly welcome the International Pharmacopoeia at their disposal.

**THE INTERNATIONAL PHARMACOPOEIA, VOLUME  
2 — QUALITY SPECIFICATIONS, THIRD EDITION,  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 1981. SW Fr 36.**

Expertly compiled by the World Health

*P. CHANG*