Tumors of the Lung

B. Mackay, J. Lukeman and N. Ordenez 1990. 432 pp. ISBN 0721658075. £46.

IN THIS compact volume MacKay, Lukeman and Ordonez provide a remarkably comprehensive account of their subject, and one or two others as well for it deals with tumours of the pleura, chest wall and mediastinum in addition to tumours of the lung. The literature survey is excellent and the many illustrations are of a high quality. Apart from a few useful diagrams, the illustrations are largely of microscopic preparations — cytological, histological, immunocytochemical and ultrastructural, with the last being particularly well represented.

The book starts with a comprehensive account of the normal respiratory tissues. Chapter 2 deals with the staging of lung cancer and quite sensibly reproduces Mountain's paper (*Chest* 89, 225S–233S, 1986) which remains the standard article on this subject. Chapter 3 deals with fine needle aspiration biopsy and covers both the technique of obtaining the biopsy and its interpretation. Chapter 4 deals with atypical and false positive diagnoses in pulmonary cytology and here the authors cover many of the non-neoplastic diseases of the lung in commendably succinct fashion. Chapter 5 deals with premalignant lesions and chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 with the main histological types of carcinoma of the lung. Succeeding chapters deal with carcinoid tumours, uncommon lung tumours, tumours of the pleura and chest wall, and tumours of the mediastinum. Individual uncommon lung tumours are dealt with very briefly and the diagnostic histopathologist may find this the least satisfactory component of the book. The final chapter deals with technical procedures for lung tumour specimens and there is then an appendix on techniques and procedures. Both these sections will be of value to the practising pathologist.

This book is a valuable addition to the field and will be of interest to all who deal with lung tumours, particularly pathologists, thoracic surgeons, radiologists, oncologists and radiotherapists. Its shelf price represents excellent value.

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News

EORTC General Assembly—1991
Report on Basic Science Research Groups

Cancer research is complex because not only do the cancers of each tissue have different biological properties (thus requiring different approaches to detection and therapy) but also a single cancer can be a mixture of tumour cells at different stages of differentiation. For this reason, cancer research teams must be multi-disciplinary in terms of background, yet all members need to have an interest in the overall goals of improved cancer treatment, earlier detection and reduced incidence.

Over the years, EORTC activities have attracted the interests of many basic science research groups who are interested in seeing laboratory research adapted through to the level of cancer patient management. These groups have been brought together to form four basic research groups: the Cell Culture and Characterisation Group, the Screening and Pharmacology Group, the Pharmacokinetics and Metabolism Group and the Receptor Study Group.

These groups have collaborated well with each other and with some of the clinical cooperative groups. However, the establishment of the Research Branch (into which the Basic Science Research Groups are to be incorporated) has made it clear that publicity of the groups activities was insufficient on two counts—one, opportunities for collaboration with the clinical groups were being missed; two, the scientific world was not fully aware of the good basic research and essential standardisation of methodologies being done under the EORTC umbrella.

The basic research groups strongly support increased publicity including more regular use of the News and Views section of the *European Journal of Cancer*. They also hope to increase interaction with the *Education Branch* to bring their research activities to a greater audience.

Cell Culture and Characterisation Group

This group (formerly the Clonogenic Assay and Screening Group) is involved in *in vitro* studies of the biological activity of a variety of anticancer agents. Of the agents evaluated recently, the work on GM-CSF in modulating tumour growth has just been published in *European Journal of Cancer*. Current work includes study of the activities of two new agents taxol and taxotére, both of which show preliminary activity in platinum-resistant ovarian cancer. This work obviously involves collaboration with the Gynecology Group and the Early Clinical Trials Group.

Screening and Pharmacology Cooperative Group

The primary aim of the SPG is the identification and evaluation of potential anti-cancer agents. This is frequently a multi-centered approach encompassing a large range of *in vivo* and *in vitro* model systems. The workings of the SPG differ from that of many other groups in two significant ways. Firstly, membership is by peer invitation and, secondly, the meetings, which are conducted using a "round table" workshop format, are held under a confidentiality agreement signed by all those present in order to protect agents not yet covered by established patents. The membership is a balance of chemists, biologists and clinicians with an interest in drug development. The close collaboration of chemists and biologists facilitates structure/activity studies and analogue development to ensure that only agents with real potential are progressed to clinical trial. This critical evaluation process, invariably involving several membes in a considerable amount of time and effort, nevertheless frequently results in negative data and compound being rejected.

One current activity involves two chemical centres in a programme to link mitosines to steroids as ways of targetting bioreductive anticancer agents. Two further centres are involved in anticancer and toxicity studies on these agents. The SPG works closely with the New Drug Development Office and other research groups, particularly the PAMM group, where members of SPG are involved in collaborative studies on the mechanism