

## Book Reviews

### Review of Urological Oncology

Edited by Jonathan Waxman and Gordon Williams. London, Edward Arnold, 1992. ISBN 0 340 54926 2. £49.50.

THE INTENTION of the editors of *Urological Oncology* is to apply modern molecular oncological techniques to the management of malignant tumours of the genito-urinary tract. This they have achieved by a combination of contributions from Britain, the U.S.A., Japan and Switzerland. The book, therefore, can claim to be international and the reader has the benefit of expertise of both urological surgeons and oncologists from the U.S.A. and Britain. Different approaches to a similar clinical condition is exemplified by the management methods of early prostatic carcinoma; conservative management in most cases in Britain and aggressive extirpation as practiced by our transatlantic surgical colleagues.

The editors are to be congratulated on the format of the book which is well set out, concise and easy to read and covers the field admirably with a happy blend between the surgical and oncological content, stressing throughout interdependence between surgery and oncology by a combined approach to the management of urological malignancy. In particular I like the conclusions paragraph at the end of each chapter which is a helpful innovation in this text book. At the end of each chapter there is also an excellent and comprehensive bibliography, which will be a valuable reference section for researchers in this field. A small criticism of an otherwise excellent text book is that chapter 17 on Embolization of the Kidney could well be omitted in view of the known disappointing results of this type of therapy in renal cell carcinoma and the subject is briefly but adequately covered in chapter 19.

I will make two suggestions for future editions as I am certain that this book will be re-printed in 2-3 years time, if only to update future advances in oncology. Firstly, inclusion in the book of a short chapter on malignant tumours of the external female genitalia, perhaps submitted by a gynaecologist. Secondly, a new and additional chapter on surgical oncology of the suprarenal glands. Inclusion of this 'Surgical Cinderella', would make the book complete in every respect.

As it stands this text book is an excellent contribution to urological oncology. The book is highly recommended and should be essential reading for oncologists, urologists, trainee urologists sitting higher degrees in their specialty and trainees in general surgery, as oncological techniques developed for treatment of urological malignancy have common application in

other conditions, such as breast carcinoma. *Urological Oncology* will undoubtedly be widely used as a reference book in medical libraries and in departments of oncology, urology and general surgery.

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### Malignant Mesothelioma

By Douglas W. Henderson, *et al.* New York, Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, 1992. 412 pp. ISBN 0-89116-977-6. £71.00.

ASBESTOS-RELATED disease tends to be endemic in certain parts of this country and in some countries around the world. The endemic areas are where there are either the producers or the consumers of asbestos and the disease caused is similar in both forms of contact. This comprehensive book on diffuse malignant mesothelioma comes from the asbestos producing areas in Australia and has four editors and a variety of contributors, both medical and non-medical.

The foreword by Christopher Wagner is a fascinating account by one of the pioneers of the early days in the 1950s when malignant mesothelioma was recognised as an entity and its connection with asbestos exposure was unravelled by clever deduction and tedious data collection and analysis. The book has been dedicated, quite appropriately, to the victims of this dreadful affliction who continue to suffer greatly while waiting for a breakthrough in the management of this disease. They pay a high price for man's ignorance of the long-term effects of the materials we use in our daily life.

The book deals with mesothelioma from three angles. It deals extensively with the mineralogy and epidemiology to help us appreciate the aetiopathology of the condition. It highlights the clinical presentation and diagnostic problems and stresses the poverty of therapeutic options that exists to this day. The book has a useful section on the important medico-legal issues of the disease and stresses the major social implications of a large close-knit cohort of asbestos exposed people, watching their colleagues being picked out one by one to suffer and die from this dreaded disease while they wait in fear for their turn.

This 383-page book is devoted entirely to one disease and does justice to the difficult subject. The diagnostic problems in malignant mesothelioma have, however, been somewhat understated perhaps because the authors work in centres which see a large number of patients with this condition. They have available to them experienced and expert staff which may not be available to clinicians elsewhere who see the occasional case. Diagnosis under these conditions can be very difficult. This can be used to make a case for having a few designated centres to diagnose and indeed treat this condition. The other criticism of this book, if criticise one must, is the pessimism with regard to treatment. No disease is untreatable. With a positive approach to its treatment and despite early failures, a suitable treatment

schedule and even a cure should ultimately become available. It would have helped if this book had contributed positively to this approach to the disease especially by those with a special interest in it.

Notwithstanding the above comments, this is indeed an excellent book on a difficult and depressing subject. Every clinician dealing with the disease will want to read it and it should be available for reference in all units that may see the condition in their practice, however rarely. There is still an awful lot of asbestos in ships and buildings and power plants around the world and the long latent period will ensure that this disease will not be eradicated for many decades to come. This book should stimulate further work in the clinical and laboratory setting for the good of the unfortunate victims of this terrible disease.

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## News

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### Experimental Haematology

The 22nd annual meeting of the International Society for Experimental Haematology will be held in Rotterdam between 22–26 August 1993. Details may be obtained from the scientific secretariat, Dr Daniel den Hoed Cancer Center, Department of Haematology and BMT, P.O.Box 5201, 3008 AE Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Tel: (31) 10439-1797, Fax: (31) 10484-2008.

### Steroid Action Symposium

An international symposium entitled Recent Advances in Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology will be held in Seefeld from 30 May to 2 June 1993. Further details may be obtained from Dr J.R. Pasqualini, C.N.R.S. Steroid Hormone Research Unit, Foundation for Hormone Research, 26 Boulevard Brune, 75014 Paris, France. Tel: (331) 45 39 91 09, Fax: (331) 45 42 61 21.

### Communication Skills

The Cancer Research Campaign Communication and Counselling Research Centre will be holding a number of 1-day courses on communication skills for senior oncologists during March (1–3), April (26–28) and May (19–21) 1993. One of the aims of the course is to provide feedback to participants regarding their skills at communicating with patients. For further

information contact Dr Lesley Fallowfield, CRC Communication and Counselling Research Centre, London Hospital Medical College, Turner Street, London E1 2AD. Tel/Fax: (071) 247-7503.

### Somatic Cell Gene Therapy

As part of its 175th anniversary year programme, the New York Academy of Sciences will hold a symposium on strategies, advances and applications of human gene therapy in Washington DC, on 26–30 June 1993. Further details can be obtained from the Conference Department, New York Academy of Sciences, New York 10021, U.S.A. Tel: (212) 838 0230, Fax: (212) 888 2894.

### Screening Methodology

On the 4–5 February 1993 in Paris the European Society of Mastology will hold a consensus conference on screening methodology and management of occult breast carcinomas. The main themes will be the European consensus on screening techniques, therapeutic attitudes regarding lesions discovered through screening, treatment of occult cancers and the role of the general practitioner in screening. For further details contact