Book Reviews

XV + 716 pp.; £ 39.50
ISBN 0-471-02078-8
This lavishly illustrated, multi-authored book represents a summary of the current state of the art with respect to various techniques of flow cytometry. The editors divided the book into 10 parts: cytophysical methods (principles), sample preparation, cytochemical methods (including stains for DNA and chromatin), standards and data processing, applications of flow cytometry in the fields of cell biology, immunology, hematology and oncology, description of commercially available instruments and their operating characteristics, including their components. The abundant literature references are remarkably up to date (1978). Since the various techniques of flow cytometry will increasingly find clinical application (apart from current applications in hematology such as blood cell and differential white blood cell counts) in fields such as drug effects (cancer chemotherapy), monitoring of leukemia, immunology and virology, cancer cell detection in clinical cytology specimens, and flow cytogenetics, this book is a must for every biomedical library and for every department of laboratory medicine. Finally, the price has been held modest indeed.

W. H. Traub, Homburg/Saar

A. B. Miller (ed.)
Screening in Cancer
A Report of a UICC International Workshop held in Toronto, Canada on 24-27 April 1978
Geneva 1978
SFr. 20.- ISBN 92-9018-040-4
This Report was developed following a Workshop on Screening in Cancer organized by the UICC in Toronto, Canada, on 24-27 April 1978, under the Chairmanship of Dr. A. B. Miller (Canada) and the Vice-Chairmanship of Dr. T. Hirayama (Japan). It consists of the papers presented at the Workshop, amended if felt necessary, by the authors immediately following the meeting, together with the reports on the discussions held during the various sessions. The first section of the Report deals with the general principles of screening, and this is followed by reviews of screening for cancer for five different sites: cervix, breast, lung, stomach, and the colon and rectum.
Each section is preceded by a summary of the ‘state of the art ‘in the site under consideration, a review of the applicability of screening for that particular site and the research issues that demand attention. Finally, on the basis of the general approaches agreed in both the session on general principles and those on the specific sites, a summary is given of the prerequisites to be
considered prior to the introduction of a screening programme and the various research issues generally applicable.

Throughout, the emphasis is on screening as a public health procedure, introduced as a means of reducing the toll of a disease, at a stage when those who are liable to develop the disease have not recognized this and have not yet availed themselves of the standard approaches to diagnosis and treatment in their community. This form of population approach to disease control, however, does not necessarily require a completely new superstructure. Indeed, some of the most successful screening programmes have been introduced where it has been possible to combine the approach to the population with existing medical care facilities. Even so, throughout the report, will be found a recognition not only of the need to evaluate the impact of screening programmes, but to ensure they are so designed and applicable that they achieve their desired objectives but do not overbalance the health care system in the area in which they are introduced. Although many screening programmes have been introduced in technically advanced countries, the participants were continuously aware of the need for caution and care when screening programmes are considered in developing countries.

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This Report is designed as a compilation of the results of a critical assessment of screening programmes mainly from an epidemiological viewpoint. It is hoped that the Report will be regarded as the basis for guidance on the planning and organization of screening programmes. It is intended for physicians and other health care personnel, cancer societies, public health and government officials and other national and international agencies concerned with cancer and health in general. Although specifically directed to cancer, the principles which underlie the Report apply to screening for all types of disease and are therefore of general health interest. Dr. H. Schönfeld P. Rosen, S. Eidelman and T. Gilat (eds.) Frontiers of Gastrointestinal Research vol. 5 Gastrointestinal Cancer: Advances in Diagnostic Technique and Therapy Karger, Basel 1979 XIV + 226 pp., 72 fig., 86 tab. SFr. 95.- ISBN 3-8055-2905-8

As the companion volume to Gastrointestinal Cancer: Advances in Basic Research (Frontiers of Gastrointestinal Research, vol. 4), the editors selected 29 papers on diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal (GI) malignancies. There are nine divisions, with topics ranging from cancer screening, nutritional assistance devise, to diagnosis and treatment of cancers of specific regions of the GI tract. The large number of topics covered, however, do not mean that they are dealt with in depth. As in the companion volume, the articles are generally concise and readable; some are also excellent reviews.
Since the mainstays of treatment of GI cancers continue to be early surgical resections, early screening by cytologic and other invasive and noninvasive examination techniques for early detection in susceptible population is emphasized in the first six articles. In advanced diseases, the merits of different palliative surgical procedures are also reviewed. Ample attention to ‘quality of life’ following different palliative procedures was also given. Seven articles were devoted to nonsurgical therapeutic modalities including chemotherapy and adjuvant therapy. These areas are adequately covered up to 1977, but recent work has made them outdated. Unfortunately, the message remains unchanged; chemotherapy and adjuvant therapy in GI cancers give but modest benefits.

The sections on esophageal, biliary and large bowel cancers are too brief and inadequately covered, whereas stomach and gastric stump cancers are covered more completely. The book ends, appropriately, with a panel discussion on the role of the gastroenterologist in oncology, especially in the training of young physicians in the area of gastrointestinal oncology.

The shortcoming of this multi-author book is the relative lack of new information. In fact, the work in this book was presented in November, 1977, and by now, much of the then new information would have been outdated. With this in mind, the book could be recommended only to specialists dealing with GI cancers.

Man-Chiu Poon and Curtis Adolphson

Erratum

In the paper by Anderson and Adams, Chemotherapy vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 1-4, 1979, an error occurred. The pivmecillinam hydrochloride tablets used in this study were not ‘stearate-film-coated’ as is stated. They are film-coated with hydroxy-propyl-methyl cellulose and should be referred to as cellulose-film-coated.