

BOOK REVIEWS

Mukherjee, A. *Nerves and Veins in Leprosy.*

Calcutta: GRECALTES in collaboration with OXFAM (India) Trust.

"This booklet has been written by Dr. Ashok Mukherjee. He was a journalist but he had kept in touch with leprosy, and he has very well described the changes in nerves and veins in this disease. The description given by him of the nerves and veins in leprosy is a very detailed one. He has dealt on the clinical conditions correlating it with the clinical presentation. He has also developed on the primary neuritic or pure neuritic leprosy.

"It is a very good reference book. The booklet contains 72 references on the subject dealt with by the author. It is a priced publication, the cost being Rs. 15 or US\$3.00. The sale proceeds of this book go to the Greater Calcutta Leprosy Treatment & Health Education Scheme (GRECALTES). The author gave the Erwin Stindl Memorial Oration on 30 January 1988, which has been published by the GRECALTES.

"A study of this book gives very clear-cut idea of the subject that he has touched. Copies of the book can be obtained from GRECALTES, 3/1/A Old Ballygunge 1st Lane, Calcutta 700 019, India."—Dr. Dharmendra in *Indian J. Lepr.* **61** (1989) 299

Rees, Richard J. W., ed. *Tuberculosis and Leprosy.* Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1988, £22.50.

With an estimated 12 million leprosy patients in the world and an annual incidence of 10 million cases of tuberculosis, these mycobacterial infections remain very high on the list of communicable diseases.

The fields of tuberculosis and leprosy research have always been closely linked but today, more than ever, our understanding and management of these diseases are progressing hand-in-hand. New technologies have been applied to mycobacterial research with interesting and far-reaching results and applications. Most notable among

these are the production of antimycobacterial monoclonal antibodies; the development of immunodiagnostic assays; the production of recombinant mycobacterial proteins; and the establishment of antigen-specific T-cell clones.

Chemotherapy employs some of the same drugs in leprosy as in tuberculosis and, with increasing problems with resistance, the push for new drugs is relevant to both diseases. The efficacy of BCG as a protection against both tuberculosis and leprosy is being carefully evaluated as efforts to develop new vaccines proceed.

This volume is, therefore, a very timely review of the state of the art of these various paths of research. With chapters written by recognized experts in the fields it offers up-to-date information and well-referenced accounts of recent research developments. It covers the broad subject areas of molecular biology, microbiology, immunology and epidemiology very thoroughly. There are also chapters on pathology and disease management which, of necessity, consider the diseases separately.

The volume concludes with a chapter on mycobacterial infections and AIDS. This is a subject of obvious growing importance where much of our present knowledge of the mycobacteria involved in opportunistic infections in AIDS has been an offshoot of research into leprosy and tuberculosis.

Some subject areas are conspicuous by their absence—not least is any contribution on nerve damage in leprosy—though whether this was an oversight, or deliberate because of the lack of progress in research, only the planning committee of this volume will know.

Every mycobacterial research worker should regard this book as an invaluable review of the most interesting developments in the subject. For those new to the field, including those working with mycobacteria in association with AIDS, it will serve as an excellent general introduction to a diverse and often rather paradoxical branch of research.—S. A. Crowley in *Leprosy Review*

Ridley, D. S. *Pathogenesis of Leprosy and Related Diseases*. Stoneham, Massachusetts, U.S.A.: Butterworths, 1988. Hardcover, 264 pp., illustrated, US\$120.

Leprosy, tuberculosis and leishmaniasis are diseases caused by essentially intracellular parasites which are mostly found in the cells of the reticuloendothelial system. The host response to the invasion of these parasites is therefore very similar. A comparative study of the evolution, the pathology, and pathogenesis of the lesions of all of these three diseases is bound to bring up some useful and interesting observations as is evidenced in this valuable book by Ridley.

The book has three parts, 23 chapters, and an appendix detailing the technical methods. The first part (four chapters) gives descriptions of the histological structure of normal skin and peripheral nerve and also a discussion on different types of inflammation. Students of medicine, especially residents in pathology and dermatology, will find this section very useful and informative. The second part (11 chapters) deals with leprosy. It contains a detailed and comprehensive account of the pathology and pathogenesis of leprosy, very thoroughly and lucidly described. This masterly presentation of the histopathological diagnosis and classification of the disease is expected of Dr. Ridley, who is the well-recognized, internationally known authority on the subject.

The chapter on "The Defect in Leprosy" brings out clearly from this expert, who has spent a lifetime of study of this disease, that the defect is multifactorial and that there is no simple solution to this problem.

Part III (seven chapters) deals with leishmaniasis, tuberculosis, and a few other granulomatous diseases which show many characteristics of leprosy.

The photomicrographs illustrating the pathological processes are well chosen and are of excellent quality. There are many relevant references given at the end of each chapter for further reading, and many research workers will find this information very useful.

As an astute pathologist, Ridley has emphasized with conviction the importance of the study of microscopic pathology and the contributions such a study could make to the understanding of the pathogenesis of inflammatory and granulomatous diseases, even in this age of advanced technology. This is a much needed reminder to researchers of today that routine microscopic pathological studies continue to have a place and cannot be replaced by any other laboratory investigations.

This book is no substitute for a textbook on leprosy and other granulomatous diseases, but it will serve a very useful purpose as an excellent reference book for teachers and students.—C. K. Job, M.D.