

# JCP

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## Book reviews

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**Cell Adhesion and Cancer.** Hogg N, Hart I, (guest editors); Sidebottom E (series editor). Vol 24 in the series **Cancer Surveys** (Pp 165; no price given.) Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. 1995. ISBN 0-97696-468-8.

"If metastases did not occur, most human tumours would not be life threatening". This frank and incisive quote from the book explains the explosion of interest in cell adhesion over the past five years and emphasises the need for more texts of this genre. The *Cancer Surveys* series aims to present latest scientific data and theories in a reader friendly format which is of interest to clinical, scientific and epidemiological workers alike. The exponentially increasing volume of information now available to cancer researchers coupled with the ever thinner slices of the field in which most find themselves working means that cross-fertilisation in this manner is essential. This is especially true as we are now seeing an increased tendency for collaborative projects drawing together workers from these divergent but related fields.

The chapters themselves are carefully written by leading researchers in cell adhesion and provide excellent reviews for those interested or involved in the field. Molecular, histological and epidemiological data are blended to produce informative texts containing strong conclusions and sensible speculation. Extensive lists of up-to-date references at the end of each chapter provide extra meat for those wishing to pursue particular subjects. It is unfortunate that the nature of this book precludes examination of a greater number of those molecules involved in cell adhesion. For example, whilst the ICAMs are dealt with quite satisfactorily, PCAM and VCAM are not mentioned. Those interested in integrins are well served, with this family of transmembrane receptors being the subject of two chapters. Disturbance of the integrity of intercellular junctions is examined through addressing adherens and desmosomes, whilst fashionable subjects covered include DCC and CD44.

The only negative aspect of this book is the limited number of diagrams and figures, most of which are cursory and of little value except to break up the text.

Despite this failing, I would heartily recommend the book not only to those specifically interested in cell adhesion, but also to anyone wanting to know more about cancer—it would be a valuable asset to both seasoned researcher and undergraduate alike.

J ROCKETT

**Quantitative Clinical Pathology.** Hamilton PW, Allen DC, eds. (Pp 342; £59.50.) Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1995. ISBN 0-632-03286-3.

As a keen quantifier of some years' vintage, I was delighted to receive a copy of this excellent new volume for review. The editors and contributors are well known in the field

of quantitative histopathology and from the start I anticipated the high standard of content, both in breadth and depth; furthermore, the production quality is of the usual excellent high standard in a Blackwell Science publication. The history of quantitation in pathology is a long one, ranging from the simple weighing of organs at necropsy to sophisticated techniques involving computing with the recognition of, say, real hues in sections or—for example, the assessment of the relatively novel concept of "fractal dimension". Why, then, is this book being reviewed for a journal of molecular pathology? Well, certainly parts of the content of this publication could by no stretch of the imagination be regarded as "molecular". However, there are several chapters which are closely involved in the latter field. Thus, there is extensive coverage of flow cytometry, which must be regarded as the first method which fell under the auspices of 'histopathology' because it could make use of paraffin wax sections and yet did not permit direct visualisation of architectural details. DNA densitometry is also dealt with very well; this is clearly another method which touches closely on the "molecular" world.

The problem with quantitation is that I suspect most medically trained people are not very numerate. Also, to be able to perform most of the techniques in this book would require money and time, commodities not available readily to most of us in the present climate! It will be interesting to see the next edition of *Quantitative Clinical Pathology* when it appears (as I am sure it will). Might I suggest that it should include chapters on quantitative PCR methodology and, perhaps on that most promising area, namely molecular modelling, especially in relation to receptor ligand binding studies?

Finally and sadly, I note the death at a young age, of one of the originators of this project, Dr Patrick Watt.

J CROCKER