16, 24, and 163—are reproduced with exceptional clarity, and the number of spelling mistakes and typographical errors is few indeed. The publishers, as well as the authors, are to be congratulated on a particularly good presentation of experimental results. In fact the book, even at £30, cannot but be recommended for anyone "...working on the appropriate subjects..." or "...whose interests border the topics dealt with in the book".

C. A. Pasternak

The hazard from dangerous exotic diseases

The chances of encountering a dangerous exotic disease in developed countries of the western world should be seen in their true perspective. Professor Westwood in his final discussion states that "while the annual death toll from road accidents is accepted by society with concern, and that from influenza, running into thousands each year, with minor interest, the occurrence of a single death from Lassa fever transmitted in a developed community would be enough to initiate a near panic from fear of the unknown and to have far-reaching political repercussions". Fear triggers action and this book is the result of concern felt in Canada about the possible importation of some dangerous exotic disease. The concern applies equally well to any developed country outside the tropics.

Professor Westwood categorises potentially threatening diseases into five groups: (1) known diseases studied sufficiently to assess their threat; (2) known diseases where foreseeable changes could bring about a dramatic escalation of the threat; (3) diseases that might develop an epidemic threat with longer-term evolutionary changes; (4) new diseases yet to be encountered; and (5) diseases that have achieved epidemiological prominence and attracted global interest to the extent that they have become politically sensitive issues.

Six diseases—smallpox, yellow fever, Lassa, Marburg, Ebola and plague—are thought to pose a significant threat to developed countries. Each is discussed in detail. Smallpox might have been omitted in view of its recent global eradication. Rift Valley fever and Crimean haemorrhagic fever might have been included in view of recent outbreaks. The third section of the book deals with the control and containment of such a disease. A swift and effective public-health response is essential. Segregation and perhaps isolation of the patient must be carried out. Patient isolators are described in detail, as is protective wear for those involved in patient care. A useful appendix discusses differential diagnosis and the laboratory investigations that might usefully be done. Other public-health measures including contact tracing, surveillance and good public relations are fully discussed.

This is an excellent and extremely readable book. It puts the problems in their true perspective. No doubt it will appeal to all infectious-disease specialists and nurses as well as community physicians and public-health officers.

D. I. H. Simpson

Practical guide to antimicrobial agents

This small American book fills a long-felt need although for British readers perhaps hardly in the way the authors intended. According to their preface it is meant primarily for the day-to-day practice of medicine; but for physicians in Britain accustomed to getting free copies of the Data Sheet Compendium, MIMS and the British National Formulary, a relatively expensive paperback on similar clinical ground may seem a needless extravagance. However, for a hospital laboratory there is a vast amount of useful information condensed here in less than 200 pages.
The main part of the book surveys 37 antimicrobial drugs, including all the main antibiotics as well as antifungal agents, urinary antiseptics and amantidine. Each entry is on a fresh page and display headings cover the drug's spectrum, pharmacology, route and dosage, antagonisms and toxicity, including monitoring. The last third of the book is a therapeutic guide for various infections with tables of the drugs' diffusability in breast milk and peritoneal and haemodialyses. There is also an interesting chapter in which the authors discuss common pitfalls in chemotherapy, and with whose views few would quarrel.

Transatlantic practice is reflected inevitably in the appendices of trade names but also appears from time to time in the main text. For example, streptomycin is still the adjuvant to penicillin for endocarditis, for which we would probably prefer gentamicin, while its use in tuberculosis has clearly been superseded to a greater extent than in Britain. Nystatin does not figure at all among the antifungals, and the use of erythromycin against some strains of \textit{Haemophilus influenzae} is not mentioned. Wider American experience shows in the specific recommendations for treating infections with atypical mycobacteria.

Ring binding allows the book to be opened flat, and bold printing and a terse style make it an ideal companion to the laboratory telephone. Faced with the off-the-cuff questions from the wards, such as the peak levels of gentamicin, the toxicity of amantidine or antagonism between cephalosporins and aminoglycosides, familiarity with this book gives the answers in seconds. It deserves a place near your desk.

J. E. Tinne

\textbf{Comprehensive virology. Vol. 16—virus-host interactions}


During the past 7 years, volumes have regularly appeared in the series entitled "Comprehensive virology". The object of the series is to collect and digest the great amount of information on viruses now available and to present this as a source book for students of all levels. Previous volumes have succeeded in this aim and this new volume is no exception.

Twenty years ago, the relationships of viruses to acute infections were rapidly, almost week by week, becoming clearer. Specific viruses were being identified in the laboratory from many of the infectious diseases; indeed, at times, the identification of new viruses outstripped their obvious connections with disease and we had symposia devoted to "Viruses in search of disease." Today, the focus of attention has shifted and it may be that we are beginning a fresh move forward in the association of viruses, the commonest pathogens of man, with diseases of a more chronic nature. As background reading to these current developments, this volume has come at an opportune time.

Chapters are devoted to general and basic aspects of virology relevant to persistence, including viral invasion, viral persistence and the evolution of viral populations and defective interfering RNA viruses in the host-cell response. They are comprehensive and well-referenced, with up-to-date information. There are sections on the persistence and transmission of cytomegalovirus, Aleutian disease of mink, the role of viruses in chronic neurological diseases and host-plant responses to virus infection. These specific topics are dealt with in a depth that permits their use as examples in other contexts.

The production and layout of the volume are pleasing, without obvious printing errors. The styles of the individual authors are pleasant and readable. By present-day standards, the price is moderate and I would, therefore, expect it to find a place on bookshelves other than those of well endowed libraries. Science moves rapidly and it would not be unreasonable to expect a new edition within a few years. I wonder, therefore, whether a volume such as this with essentially ephemeral contents really requires a hardback?

R. N. P. Sutton