the reviewer would censure the publishers for claiming to produce a series of monographs on
"Patterns of Progress" when a major contribution is four years late and the specialisteditor has the opportunity to bring progress up to date, in summary form, no later than two
years before final publication.

R. J. W. REES

Basic medical microbiology
US$11.95.

This is a comprehensive account including parasitology, mycology, virology, immunology
and "selected topics" which are oral microbiology, hospital-acquired infections and
anaerobic infections. It is intended for students of subjects supplementary to medicine and
also as an introduction for medical, dental and veterinary students. It contains a great deal
of valuable information and is easy to read provided that the terms are understood; un-
familiar words often go unexplained when they first appear in the text but a glossary is
provided. This is a good idea, but the glossary should be complete; for example, antibody
and avidity do not appear.

The only serious error noticed was the statement in a table that 1–2% phenol can be used
in hospital for its activity against tubercle bacilli. The section on treatment in anaerobic
infection seems out of place in a book of this kind and few would agree that chloramphenicol
is the drug of choice in a seriously ill patient; there is no mention of metronidazole for use
against anaerobes.

The fact that the authors are non-dental scientists working in an American school of
dentistry does not detract from the usefulness of the book to students in Britain. Medical
and dental students and laboratory technicians in training who have sufficient knowledge of
terminology will find it particularly useful as an introduction to the subject. It has many
excellent photographs and line drawings, and is very reasonably priced.

E. JOAN STOKES

The clinical laboratory as an aid in chemotherapy of infectious disease
University Park Press. Pp. xii and 183. £11-95.

The rather cumbersome title hides the proceedings of the 7th annual symposium of the
Eastern Pennsylvania branch of the American Society for Microbiology, held in November
1975. The book that has now emerged is a survey of present techniques and prospects in the
field of antibiotic sensitivity testing and assay, well organised with little overlap and quite a
nice dovetailing of contributions. The editors have had less success in other directions:
the book does little to invalidate Oscar Wilde’s view that “the English have everything in
common with the Americans except, of course, language”, occasionally lapsing into
aberrations that are, I suspect, not even good American. The index is a collector’s item—
arbitrary, incomplete (Escherichia coli, mentioned on nearly every page, gets one puzzling
citation) and totally unhelpful.

Topics covered range from disk testing, through new devices, to specialized techniques for
testing the susceptibility of mycobacteria, anaerobes and fungi. There are also chapters on
antibiotic combinations, assay methods, laboratory monitoring of antibiotic resistance
patterns and the necessity of sensitivity testing. The scope of the book is thus attractively
wide, but unfortunately a number of the contributions are somewhat tendentious and most
are disappointingly superficial. No discussion of the papers is recorded.

For these reasons the book can be recommended as a useful introductory text for new-
comers to the field, but the majority of contributions are too pedestrian to be of more than
passing interest to established workers.

DAVID GREENWOOD