

Pathology of Tumours in Laboratory Animals. Volume II: Tumours of the Mouse. v. s. TURUSOV. (Ed.) IARC Scientific Publications No. 23, 669 pp. International Agency for Cancer Research on Cancer, Lyon, 1979.

After the publication in two parts (in 1973 and 1976) of Volume I in this series of monographs on tumours in rats, I have long been waiting both for the present book on mouse tumours and for the one that is still promised on hamster tumours. Some of the chapters were completed over 6 years ago and some of the authors, including Dr. Georgiana Bonser, are sadly no longer with us. The need for such books is undeniable, for it is now increasingly realized that specialists in human or in domestic animal pathology, unless they have had special training in small animal pathology, are apt to flounder when faced with the peculiar and sometimes unique problems posed by tumours in laboratory rodents.

In two important ways the volumes in this series represent compromises. Firstly, despite the efforts of the editors to impose a standard format, the quality of the different monographs varies. This, however, was unavoidable since the subject as a whole is now so vast that no one person, however experienced, is capable of covering it all. As it is several chapters are limited in coverage to those strains of mice and those kinds of lesions with which the author(s) happen(s) to be familiar, and practicing pathologists will from time-to-time encounter tumours of kinds not mentioned or illustrated in the book. Secondly, the book is concerned only with neoplasms, and hence is not always very helpful to the pathologist faced with doubtfully neoplastic lesions.

Perhaps, inevitably, some of the monographs dwell too much on the special and narrow research interests of their authors. Partly for this reason the least comprehensive parts of some monographs are those on mechanisms of induction of tumours and on comparative pathology.

An important feature of the volume is the abundance of illustrations, most of which are of high standard and helpful; but sometimes the balance between the common and exotic is not right. For instance, the absence of any illustration of one of the commonest uterine tumours, namely Dunn type A reticulum-cell sarcoma, is surprising in view of the difficulty of distinguishing between such tumours, malignant schwannomas and other forms of endometrial sarcoma. The need for economy ruled out the possibility of providing illustrations in colour. For the most part this does not matter but for some tissues, e.g. pituitary gland, lack of colour has detracted from value.

A National Cancer Institute team, headed by Harold Stewart, dispenses with the term 'benign adenoma' in their classification of lung tumours because of lack of reliable

biological criteria for distinguishing benign from malignant. To me this has never seemed a good enough reason for bracketing together, on the one hand, very slow growing and clearly non-invasive lesions consisting of well-differentiated cells with, on the other hand, highly proliferative invasive and metastasising tumours consisting of wildly undifferentiated cells. At the same time I should like to see the confusing term 'pulmonary adenomatosis' abandoned in favour of 'cuboidal/columnar metaplasia of alveolar epithelium'. In both rats and mice this primary metaplastic change is subject to further metaplastic change to epithelium of the squamous type—a phenomenon correctly referred to as metaplastic change in the monograph.

No-one should regard this book as a bible based on tablets of stone, for it is no more than a series of monographs written by busy pathologists working within the limits of their own experience and at the edge of scientific knowledge generally. In an Introductory note the Editors state that they would welcome suggestions for improvements since revision is eventually contemplated. They should expect to receive some such suggestions, but mainly from a fraternity of small-animal pathologists who are most grateful to them for the present book.

FRANCIS J. C. ROE
Wimbledon, London