statements that indicate that their understanding of the principles of magnetic resonance is less secure than it should be, eg the statement that enhancement of MRI with paramagnetic materials has a similar mechanism to that seen with iodinated compounds on CT scanning (page 76) would not pass muster in an elementary physics examination. The average physician might also have a little difficulty in interpreting the terminology in magnetic resonance imaging. Although the editor rightly says that there are numerous texts on the principles of such imaging, perhaps a few pages giving modified formulae showing how the pixel image intensity is related to the relaxation times and some explanation of the concept of the Larmor frequency would have been valuable so that terms such as 'T1 weighted', 'T1ρ', 'T2', etc convey a clearer meaning. A further criticism concerns the sections on PET and SPECT. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that these techniques are essentially used for research but are not, at present, of significant value in the vast majority of neurological conditions. While of considerable scientific interest, it is difficult to justify the space given to PET in the chapters on epilepsy or basal ganglia disease and it could be argued that the physiological results obtained by PET in cerebro-vascular disease thus far have merely repeated, at great expense, in man what has been known to animal physiologists for decades.

Finally, any neuro-radiological book must stand or fall on the quality of its illustrations. Reproduction of scans and angiograms is notoriously difficult but overall this publication has produced reasonable pictures with a few exceptions. A little more detail to the legends would have been beneficial and markers on the illustrations would have guided the novice to the relevant details.

Overall, a reasonably good buy for the general physician.

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Textbook of uncommon cancer. Edited by C. J. Williams, J. G. Krikorian, M. R. Green and D. Raghavan. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, 1988. 1064 pp. £110.00

It might seem at first sight that the last book a general physician or surgeon would need is a *Textbook of uncommon cancer*. This subject should surely be the province of the expert and he or she will know about it anyway. Nobody, be they generalists or specialists, who looks after patients with cancer, however devoted to their subject, will not at some time have experienced a sudden feeling of inadequacy on seeing a rarity on the histopathologist's report. Rapid recourse to a standard textbook may be disappointing and a computer search leaves one with a great deal of paper with information that is difficult to assess. This book is going to be helpful for it brings together much information on clinical presentation, pathology, diagnosis and management of innumerable rare cancers classified on the basis of either site or system.

The organisation of the book has a logic of its own but, no matter, the individual contributions from British, American, European, Australian and Japanese experts

are of a uniformly high quality. I very much hope that the editors will include the haemopoietic lymphoid system and paediatric tumours in their next edition as this leaves a big gap in the subjects covered, even though it will take the next edition to well over the present thousand pages.

Any criticisms are minor. I wonder what the purpose is of giving detailed radiotherapy fields in the treatment of esthesioneuroblastoma and nasopharyngeal carcinoma but not for other tumours. It is very important, in a book which is to be used for reference, to give the tumours in the index. For example, Askin's tumour is mentioned in the text more than once but is not found in the index. Desmoid tumours also are not mentioned in the index.

This book is certainly not a dry rehearsal of minutiae. For example, there are up-to-the-minute discussions of the cytogenetics of tumours. The reciprocal t(11:22)(q24:q12), a cytogenetic rearrangement in peripheral neuroepithelioma, is described and beautifully illustrated. The high level of C myc expression in peripheral neuroepithelioma is also illustrated and explained. The implications of these findings for both diagnosis and the classification of these tumours is clearly presented.

Also explained, in another section, are the pitfalls of statistics of cancer survival which incidentally mentions the 'Will Rogers effect'. Will Rogers, an American humourist-philosopher, discussing geographic migration in the economic depression in America in the 1930s, said: 'When the Okies left Oklahoma and moved to California they raised the average intelligence in both states'. This principle can be applied to stage migration in cancer and is a source of misleading statistics when survival rates for a particular cancer are compared at different times. These two illustrations give an idea of how comprehensive and informative this book is. I enjoyed dipping into it which is how I suspect Chris Williams and his co-editors feel it ought to be read.

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Day light robbery. By Damien Downing. Arrow, London, 1988. 170 pp. £3.99.

Day light robbery, subtitled 'The importance of sunlight', is just not a book that I expected to read at this time. After all the publicity given to the College's recent Report on the dangers of injudicious sun exposure and all of our attempts to make the public more aware of the links between skin cancer and solar irradiation it is surprising to see a publication preaching the opposite doctrine. Dr Damien Downing, a founder of the British Nutrition Society, is quite critical of orthodox medical advice in a number of areas, but in particular of our warnings about sunbathing.

The 16 chapters contain 143 pages devoted to a description of the supposed benefits of sun exposure. He believes that all of us in the UK are light-deficient and states that in order to avoid light deficiency most UK residents will need to travel abroad regularly or 'to use artificial light.' There is no doubt that his implied criticism of our failure to act on knowledge of the