

BOOK REVIEW

DIE INTERNE KREBSTHERAPIE. Von H. D. Diamond. Deutsche Übersetzung von P. Obrecht und P. Berg. 158 Seiten, 42 Abbildungen und 23 Tabellen. Georg Thieme, Stuttgart 1960. Price: DM 29.50.

It is becoming increasingly necessary for clinicians to have access to an informative review of the chemical agents available for the treatment of malignant disease. Thousands of new substances are tested each year for their carcinoid effect although only a few are submitted for clinical trial and even fewer gain clinical use. It is widely accepted that malignant disease cannot be cured by chemical agents but this does not necessarily mean that the course cannot be influenced by medication. Clinically useful chemotherapeutic agents and hormones are already available in such large numbers that much confusion and uncertainty exist regarding their fields of application and dosage. Insufficient knowledge concerning these substances results in their not being so widely used as they should be in the palliative treatment of neoplasms.

Thieme's Publishing House has issued 'Die interne Krebstherapie', a German translation of the original work 'The Medical Management of Cancer', published in America in 1958 and written by H. DIAMOND, who has had wide experience in this field. The book deals with a number of malignant diseases — one chapter for each — that have often proved to respond to chemotherapeutic and hormonal methods of treatment. Malignant lymphomas and leukemias are afforded pride of place, but other types of malignancy, such as mammary and pulmonary carcinoma, are also included. Attention is mainly concentrated on chemotherapy and hormonal treatment while intracavitary radiologic treatment is mentioned only for information; intracavitary radioisotope therapy is however given a special, exhaustive chapter by two radiotherapists.

This readable book contains interesting information not only on the treatment of different diseases but also on their symptomatology and variations. No objections can be raised to the methods of treatment described although other forms might in certain cases prove equally satisfactory. The procedures are competently and simply described, usually with reference to original publications. The work is somewhat biased, as the author refers almost exclusively to experiences reported in the Anglo-Saxon literature; this has been rectified to some extent by the publishers who have added a list of German publications to the references given for each chapter. The brief descriptions of radiologic treatment methods are largely in accordance with the methods and doses used in Sweden.

The book should be of interest to all clinicians who deal with cases of malignant disease. Despite its age it is still of great value in practice, seeing that many years of clinical trials are necessary before a new preparation can be put on the market for general use. A few substances, fairly generally employed in recent years (e. g. cyclophosphamide-endoxan and phenylalanine mustard — Melphalan, Sarcolysin, PAM) are however missing. Nor is there any mention of more recent forms of administration, such as perfusion and continuous intra-arterial infusion, although admittedly these are methods that are not yet ripe for general clinical use.

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