association is influenced by the way in which the control group is selected and in this regard we question the nature of controls studied by Jensen and colleagues. It appears that none of the asymptomatic control subjects was examined microscopically to determine the existence of urethral polymorphonuclear (PMN) leucocytes. Indeed, men with "asymptomatic" urethritis may have been included in the control group. Few investigators have compared the prevalence of mycoplasmas in men with microscopic urethritis who have no signs or symptoms with that in men without urethritis. However, Swartz *et al*⁶ found that *Chlamydia trachomatis* was isolated more frequently from men with asymptomatic NGU than from those without objective urethritis, suggesting that urogenital pathogens may be involved in the aetiology of this condition. In addition, it is unclear whether Jensen and colleagues examined the asymptomatic subjects clinically at enrolment. Clearly, asymptomatic men with a discharge on examination and objective urethritis (≥ 5 PMN leucocytes/high-power microscopic field) have "clinical urethritis" and should be excluded from the control group and included in the study group. Inclusion of asymptomatic men who have objective urethritis, with or without an observable discharge, in the control group would prevent proper evaluation of negative associations. This may have influenced to some extent the significance given to *M genitalium* by Jensen and colleagues and biased their results against detecting an association of *U urealyticum* with NGU.

P J HORNER
D TAYLOR-ROBINSON
The Jefferiss Wing, St. Mary's Hospital,
London W2 1NY, UK

- 1 Tully JG, Taylor-Robinson D, Cole RM, Rose DL. A newly discovered mycoplasma in the human urogenital tract. *Lancet* 1981;i: 1288-91.
- 2 Taylor-Robinson D, Furr PM, Tully JG, Barile MF, Møller BR. Animal models of *Mycoplasma genitalium* urogenital infection. *Isr J Med Sci* 1987;23:561-4.
- 3 Taylor-Robinson D, Gilroy CB, Hay PE. Occurrence of *Mycoplasma genitalium* in different populations and its clinical significance. *Clin Infect Dis* 1993;17(Suppl 1): 66-8.
- 4 Horner PJ, Gilroy CB, Thomas BJ, Naidoo ROM, Taylor-Robinson D. Association of *Mycoplasma genitalium* with acute nongonococcal urethritis. *Lancet* 1993;342: 582-5.
- 5 Jensen JS, Ørsum R, Dohn B, Uldum S, Worm A-M, Lind K. *Mycoplasma genitalium*: a cause of male urethritis? *Genitourin Med* 1993;69:265-9.
- 6 Swartz SL, Kraus SJ, Herrmann KL, Stargel MD, Brown WJ, Allen SD. Diagnosis and etiology of nongonococcal urethritis. *J Infect Dis* 1978;138:445-54.

***Neisseria gonorrhoeae* isolates at St Mary's Hospital, London 1980-91**

Renton *et al*¹ report an increase in isolates of *gonorrhoeae* at St Mary's in 1990—and a similar pattern has been reported nationally—accompanied by speculation that this may be an indicator of varying success in educational programmes in safe sex. We feel that, before elaborate behavioural explanations are pursued, it must be clarified that demographic factors would in any case suggest a peaking of multiple-partner sexual activity around 1989 and 1990 for England & Wales as a whole.

We attach the latest single year popula-

tion estimates for 1991 between the ages 15 and 35 years. The peak in the mid-20s is very marked—and will be still more acute in the revised estimates due shortly. Johnson *et al*² identified clear age differences in reported heterosexual multiple-partner sexual activity—although even their sample size (18 876) did not permit calculation of rates for single ages. Nevertheless, an equivalent peaking in the mid-20s may be inferred. As might be expected, attendance at STD clinics was strongly associated with reported numbers of sexual partners—both homosexual and heterosexual. A coincidence of the two peaks in 1990 might well generate the national pattern observed.

From this perspective, it is the dramatic

fall in isolates throughout the 1980s that requires special explanation in terms of changing sexual practices—while the 1990 peak could be partly the reassertion of a demographic secular pattern, as observed in the 50 years up to 1975.

T HENNELL
JOHN R ASHTON
Mersey Regional Health Authority,
Hamilton House, 34 Pall Mall,
Liverpool L3 6AL, UK

- 1 Renton AM, Ison CA, Whitaker L, Kirtland K, Kúpak E, Harnè JRW. *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* isolated at St Mary's Hospital, London 1990-91. *Genitourin Med* 1991;69:286-9.
- 2 Johnson AM, Wadsworth J, Wallings K, Bradshaw S, Field J. Sexual lifestyles and HIV risk. *Nature* 1992;360:410-2.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Human Herpes Viruses. Edited by Bernard Roizman, Richard J Whitely and Carlos Lopez. New York, Raven Press. (US \$113.50, pp 447.) 1993. ISBN 0-7817-0024-8.

Over the past 25 years there have been several major advances in human herpes viruses research. Firstly, there has been an appreciation of the diversity of clinical diseases caused by this group of viruses, ranging from the trivial to the life-threatening; and the list is getting longer all the time. Second was the recognition that this group of viruses have evolved a variety of complex mechanisms (many of which are still poorly understood) for persisting in the host, probably for life. Third, there has been an appreciation of the vast and complex diversity of this group of viruses. And finally, there has been the recent introduction of safe and effective drugs to treat some of these infections.

The names Roizman, Whitely and Lopez are inextricably linked with human herpes

viruses and the publication of this volume reflects the editors' research commitments, clinical expertise and above all, enthusiasm for the subject. The volume comprises 16 chapters dealing with basic virology, epidemiology, clinical syndromes, anti-viral therapy, immunity and vaccine development. All 16 chapters are well written and readable, although several chapters, notably the chapter on anti-viral therapy, have a paucity of references (including several key publications) from European journals.

I was a little disappointed with the chapter *The Epidemiology and Clinical Manifestations of Herpes Simplex Virus Infection* which did not provide any information concerning the risk of acquisition of either orolabial or genital herpes from symptomatic and asymptomatic sources. In addition, the overview of HSV seroepidemiology was uncritical and referred only to the type specific assays developed in Atlanta, not even mentioning the Western blot type specific assays developed in Seattle.

The most readable chapters, which bring together a good deal of useful and diverse information, are chapter 2 *Herpes Simplex Viruses and their Replication*, chapter 9 *Human Herpes Viruses 6 and 7*; *Molecular Biology and Clinical Aspects*, chapter 10 *The*

Biology of B-virus (cercopithecine virus I) chapter 16 *Immunity to Herpes Virus Infection in Humans*, and the four chapters dealing with vaccines. I particularly enjoyed reading Richard Whitely's chapter on B-virus which outlines the history of human infection, virology, pathology and pathogenesis, latency, epidemiology, clinical manifestations in animals and humans, diagnosis, treatment and control. The chapter highlights the importance of the possibility of acquisition of new viruses by humans.

Overall, I am sure this book will find wide appeal with virologists, and all those physicians who are interested in infectious diseases, and I would recommend the book to all those who can afford it, and those who can't, should make sure a copy is available in the local library.

ADRIAN MINDEL

HIV and AIDS—Your Questions Answered. By Graham Barter, Simon Barton, Brian Gazzard. Edinburgh, Churchill Livingstone. 1993. (Pp 173 £11.95) ISBN 0-443-04752-9.

This very readable book consists of 17 chapters of questions and answers and one chapter listing useful addresses and further reading. The scope of the chapters ranges from epidemiology through laboratory and clinical aspects to palliative care and ethical questions. The answers are thoughtful but inevitably in a book of this size, there is not room to cite the detailed evidence or give references. Some of the questions cover "grey areas" such as oro-genital transmission where the answer given ("so infrequent that it is difficult to exclude other modes of transmission") is perhaps inevitably, more a matter of opinion than a factual answer. Occasionally the answer given is actually wrong—for example, "the blood transfusion service is constantly vigilant for a rise in the incidence of HIV-2, so that it should also be tested for very rapidly". In fact routine screening for HIV-2 (as well as HIV-1) has been nationwide practice for blood donations since May 1990.

The information on breast feeding as a route of transmission is also out of date: "It seems likely that breast feeding does carry a risk of infecting an otherwise non-infected baby. However, this risk is estimated as small". In fact, Peckham and Giaquinto have stated "that the additional risk of infection over and above the transmission in utero and at delivery, is about 15%" (ABC or AIDS, 3rd Edition). Mostly, however, the answers are extremely informative and useful.

I liked the answer differentiating EBV mononucleosis from primary HIV infection. There are also useful clinical tips on a wide range of subjects including chronic sinusitis and aphthous ulceration. There is much that is good about this book and it deserves to sell well.

CA CARNE

NOTICES

The Australasian College of Venereologists, New South Wales Chapter, will hold a scientific meeting titled "*Viral STD: Resistance and Therapeutics*" on Friday 4 March 1994 at The Marriott Hotel, Sydney.

Details may be obtained from: Dr Robert Finlayson, 302 Bourke Street, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010, Australia. Tel: +61 2 331 6151. Fax: +61 2 331 3943.

Second European Meeting on Migratory Prostitution, Istanbul, 29-30 March, 1994.

Details may be obtained from Prof. P-A Mårdh, WHO Coll. Centre for STD and their Complications, Uppsala University, Box 552, S-751 22 Uppsala, Sweden. Fax: +46-18 557301, Tel: +46-18 663902.

MSSVD LIBRARY

The following books have been purchased for MSSVD library in 1993.

ASTRUC, Jean *A treatise of venereal diseases in nine books* (trans from the Latin). London, Innys et al, 1754. This famous book is one of the classics of venereology.

COLLES, Abraham *Selection from the works*. London, New Sydenham Society, 1881. Colles' law on congenital syphilis is well known, but he wrote about many other aspects of venereology, most of which are included here.

DIDAY, Paul *A treatise on syphilis in newborn children and infants at the breast*. London, New Sydenham Society, 1859. Diday was a pupil of Ricord. This book is the first of any note on the subject, and became a widely-read classic.

FOURNIER, Alfred *Syphilis and marriage* (trans from the French). London, David Bogue, 1881. When it was realised that syphilis was contagious beyond its primary stage the question of marriage became delicate and important, and was addressed in detail in this famous work.

GATAKER, Thomas *Observations on venereal complaints and on the methods recommended for their cure*. Edinburgh, Bell et al, 1787. This little book is in the form of two

"letters to a surgeon", and is illuminating about British practice at this time.

LUMB, Major NPL *The urethroscope in the diagnosis and treatment of urethritis* London, Bale, Sons and Danielsson, 1919. This short book by an army surgeon describes and illustrates an art, now lost, which was essential for a venereologist in the pre-antibiotic era.

PAGET, Stephen *John Hunter*. London, T Fisher Unwin, 1897. This well-known biography gives a vivid picture of Hunter's career and personality.

PARKER, Langston *The modern treatment of syphilitic diseases*. London, Churchill, 1845. Parker worked at the Queen's Hospital in Birmingham. The book also contains chapters on gonorrhoea, genital ulcers and other aspects of venereology.

RICORD, Philippe *Lettres sur la syphilis* Paris, l'Union Médicale, 1856. This book, which contains essays on various aspects of syphilis by one of the masters of 19th C venereology, was widely read and highly influential.

Selected Essays and Monographs, vol 161. New Sydenham Society, 1897. These articles are mostly about treponemal disease. They include four on yaws, two on neurosyphilis by Alfred Fournier and one by Albert Neisser on the relation between early syphilis treated with mercury and subsequent late syphilis.

Selected Essays and Monographs, vol 170. London, New Sydenham Society, 1900. A further selection of papers on dermatovenereology by well-known authors. Wilhelm Erb's account of the aetiology and treatment of tabes dorsalis and Edward Ehlers' of syphilis in Iceland are of particular interest.

SWEDIAUR, Francois *Practical observations on venereal complaints*. Edinburgh, Bell et al, 1787. Swediaur was an experienced clinician, and this book was widely read in its day. If for no other reason, it is worth reading for his withering review of John Hunter's *Treatise on the venereal disease*.

WORLD FORUM ON SYPHILIS AND OTHER TREPONEMATOSES. US Government Printing Office, 1962. The book contains 90 papers on public health, clinical, laboratory and behavioural aspects of treponemal disease read at a meeting in Washington DC.

von ZUMBUSCH, Leo *Atlas of syphilis* London, John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, 1922. The colour photographs are of remarkable quality, and give an unforgettable picture of syphilis as it was 70 years ago.

The MSSVD Historical Library is housed in the Library of the Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole St, London W1M 8AE.