scrutiny some errors were noted. For example, the discussion of gloves (p. 45) wrongly indicates that the function of powder in gloves is to minimize sweat buildup, whereas it actually serves as a "lubricant" in the process of donning the gloves. The prefix "cirrho-" (as in cirrhosis) is said to mean "yellow," whereas it actually means "tan," coming from the Greek word for "tawny"; the thoracic duct is shown draining (into the venous system) on the right side of the neck, rather than its correct position on the left. It deserves to be noted that the blood collected in the dermal puncture technique arises only minimally from capillaries, while flowing predominantly from other components of the cutaneous microvasculature. The photographic illustrations of procedural sequences are generally excellent and serve to visually illuminate what would otherwise be a series of somniferous directions. However, the photograph of the "good" blood smear slide (p. 253) leaves much to be desired because of the dark background chosen and deserves to be replaced in any subsequent edition of this very valuable book.

This book intended for phlebotomists should also be useful to medical technologists, nurses, and other allied health personnel.

Sheshadri Narayanan
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Weill Medical College of Cornell University
New York, NY 10021


This book is part of the series "Current Clinical Urology". The cover states that "world-class authorities from a variety of disciplines provide a comprehensive and balanced evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of screening for prostate cancer". At present, screening for prostate cancer (with the determination of prostate-specific antigen in blood and the digital rectal examination of the prostate) is perhaps the most controversial issue in cancer screening. In 19 chapters, prostate cancer is examined in detail from different points of view. A CD ROM containing software for calculating the individual patient's risk index of prostate cancer is attached. According to the installation instructions, it is compatible with many versions of MS Windows; however, a working installation of the program was unfortunately not successful using four different computers with three different operating systems. The program is based on algorithms developed some years ago (Opotnberg et al., Urology 1995;50:665–72). It uses the data for total prostate-specific antigen (but not the ratio of free to total prostate-specific antigen), digital rectal examination, age, race, and family history.

The editors have put together the different views, the pros and cons for prostate cancer screening. Detailed information is given about the ongoing prospective trials in the US, Canada, and Europe for evaluating its effectiveness. A survey illustrates the various recommendations for prostate cancer screening from different health organizations. Most articles were written by urologists, and this book is more than a survey of screening, as additional problems of prostate cancer are discussed. For example, two chapters, making up ~10% of the total book, deal with different imaging modalities for use in prostate cancer staging rather than in screening. Similarly, the well-written chapter about risk factors of prostate cancer is not directly related to the screening problem.

Although the book presents a good general view of recent problems of prostate cancer screening and helps readers to become acquainted with this field, there are a few deficiencies. Quite a few of the chapters overlap, and topics occur in several chapters (e.g., epidemiologic data, presentation of studies, and risk factors), giving redundant information. In addition, the order of the chapters is not clearly arranged, which is detrimental to the objective of the book (e.g., the evidence on the effectiveness of prostate cancer screening is discussed six chapters after the article "Evidence of Benefit of Screening in Other Cancers"). Lastly, it is astonishing that the analytical problems of the assays for prostate-specific antigen, and the difficulties resulting from the variability of data obtained with the different assays, are not discussed. Not only laboratorians would welcome such a critical up-to-date review. The section on calculation of prostate cancer risk index describes the attached program, but does not make reference to other successful models, e.g., those based on logistic regression or artificial neural networks.

Taken together, this book offers valuable background information for urologists and family physicians but may not be an essential item for the bookshelf of a clinical laboratory.

Klaus Jung
University Hospital Charité
Humboldt University Berlin
D-10098 Berlin, Germany


This book comprises 30 reports from participants in the second meeting on excitatory amino acids (EAAs), held in Manaus, Brazil in 1998, and the somewhat puzzling subtitle "Ten Years Later" refers to the decade between this and the first meeting, also held in Manaus. During this period, many of the EAA receptor genes were cloned, and the field began to take on a more defined shape. Although this book reflects some of those advances, the study of EAAs has become one of the largest and most active areas in contemporary