Book reviews

The Strangeways Research Laboratory 75th Anniversary Symposium. The Control of Tissue Damage. Edited by Peter Maddison. ARC Conference Proceedings. No 2. Pp. 226. £5.00. Arthritis and Rheumatism Council: London, 1987.

In April 1987 the Strangeways Research Laboratory ran a three day meeting entitled 'The control of tissue damage'. This was an international symposium reflecting their current interest in connective tissue metabolism. Many took this opportunity to acknowledge and remember Dame Honor Fell who saved the laboratory and secured its existence.

The conference proceedings were available for the meeting and include a series of short summaries from the main speakers and a large number of poster abstracts. The book was invaluable for those attending the meeting. For a wider audience some references in the speakers' abstracts would have been helpful, and the book inevitably lacks any discussion. Out of the context of the meeting I would have liked to see a Preface from the editor and the meeting organiser, giving some background to the series and the specific symposium. Some indication of the selection or refereeing system would be helpful as many of the presentations are, in effect, mini-papers, and potentially quotable.

The greatest benefit of the book is as a useful 'snapshot' of a rapidly changing field and the contribution that modern molecular biology is making. Those interested in the physiology and pathology of bone and joint tissue, and in the complex problem of connective tissue turnover, will find something of interest in this volume. The ARC and the editor are to be commended on the very rapid release of such a reasonably priced book, as its undoubted value will soon diminish with time.

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Joint Protection and Rehabilitation in Chronic Rheumatic Disorders. By Merete Brattstrom. Pp. 256. £20.00. Wolfe Medical Publications: London, 1987.

The physical and environmental methods of management of chronic disabling polyarthritis are described in detail. For those with an interest in what physiotherapists and occupational therapists get up to, and what the rationale of physical management is, this book will be of great interest.

The great strength of the book is the good quality large print with ample illustrations and 60 pages of photographs illustrating environmental aids, walking aids, and, in

particular, how commonly performed tasks involving gripping increase the tendency towards ulnar drift, but how with modification these can be more easily and less painfully performed without increasing forces expected to aggravate ulnar drift.

The book was not entirely easy to read owing to its terminology; being a 'splitter' rather than a 'lumper' the use of the term 'chronic polyarthritis' throughout the book took some getting used to. British clinicians too will be envious of the assumptions throughout the book that every hospital has its own orthotics workshop ready to adapt aids to individual needs. It is also clear that the tasks performed by occupational therapists in England would be done either by physiotherapists or ergotherapists in Sweden. It was a delight, however, to see the important role of the home visit stressed, and this book will be useful ammunition for those fighting for increased domiciliary physiotherapists and occupational therapists within their health districts.

The section on applied anatomy was rather too expansive for my taste, and not necessary I think for British trained rheumatologists or physiotherapists. There were one or two surprising omissions, such as the value of the microwave oven, 'no hands' telephones, and a very outdated section on shoes where there was no comment on extra depth shoes, which I personally have found invaluable. The value of the duvet was also not stressed.

There was a surprising stress on the importance of patients with polyarthritis avoiding wearing seat belts. The assumption underlying this was that a whiplash injury which allowed the neck to go into flexion could sever the cord at C1. I have not seen this reported and feel that damage to deformed limbs from an 'unrestrained' accident would be the greater risk.

Despite these reservations this was an interesting book and emphasised a wide variety of ways we can help our patients with uncontrolled deforming arthritis. It should be in the library of every rehabilitation department and will be of interest to physiotherapists and occupational therapists in addition to rheumatologists. It should be obligatory reading for senior registrars in rehabilitation or rheumatology.

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Studies in Osteoarthritis: Pathogenesis, Intervention, Assessment. Eds. D J Lott, M K Jasani, G F B Birdwood. Pp. 135. £41.95. John Wiley: Chichester, 1987.

The outcome of a workshop arranged by Ciba-Geigy to consider the processes that mediate joint disease in osteoarthritis (OA), the means for intervening, and the value of methods of assessment of change in joints is presented. A slim volume in hard covers with copious illustrations, many in colour, it presents currently held