**Book reviews**


Snapper's famous book has been completely rewritten and the two present authors are to be congratulated on maintaining a high standard of authority and readability.

Chapters 13—Familial occurrence and chromosome abnormalities, 15—Generalized bone disease, 19—Cholesterol metabolism, and 28—Treatment are truly excellent reviews not readily available elsewhere.

Despite 18 pp. on the detection of Bence Jones protein, I cannot accept any form of heat-testing as adequate in 1971. The simplest screening test (Bradshaw, 1906) of layering urine over conc. HCl is not considered. The statement that urine for electrophoresis 'must first be dialyzed for 24 to 48 hours and then concentrated' is untrue, as colloidion thimble ultrafiltration can so prepare urine within 1 hour. The authors fail to emphasize that the most valuable distinction between 'false-positive' excess normal* light chains (from tubular damage) and Bence Jones† protein is electrophoresis (diffuse polyclonal* mobilities v. narrow monoclonal†) and not immunoelectrophoresis.

There are a few other didactic statements which are untrue:

- p. 229 in hyperviscosity due to 7s IgG—'the immunoglobulin is an IgG-3';
- p. 236 in cryoglobulinaemia—'by an excess of the IgG3 subclass' (both syndromes occur with other IgG subclasses);
- p. 288 referring to alpha-chain disease—'the complete heavy chain of —IgA— (most of the Fd is missing).

The repeated inference that myeloma kidney is the commonest renal lesion ignores their own data (p. 264, pyelonephritis in 37, myeloma kidney in 24 of 91 post mortem examinations). Their theories on amyloidosis, while most interesting, are superseded by current evidence of the light-chain V-fragment being involved in amyloid.

Chapter 28, on treatment, opens with a sound assessment of various trials. This evidence of hundreds of successfully treated patients is then disproportionately overruled with an anecdote of one of their own patients.

They also sarcastically infer (p. 307, 1.7) that the M.R.C. trial centres 'refuse to treat . . . uncooperative patients, etc.' This of course is a misrepresentation: such patients would yield unreliable data and were therefore not admitted to the trial but nevertheless received treatment as non-trial subjects. Their appraisal of prednisone and fluoride is splendid but they omit the important general treatments of maintaining mobilization and a high fluid throughput.

Notwithstanding these niggling errors, this book remains the best single monograph on myelomatosis and I learned a great deal from it.  

**J. R. HOBBS**


Rheumatoid arthritis does not appear to be a particularly rewarding disease from the point of view of the routine chemical pathologist. His contribution to both diagnosis and the monitoring of therapy is negligible. The title of Dr. West's book is thus at first sight surprising. But it soon becomes apparent that he is not concerned with chemical pathology in its role as a routine diagnostic aid, but in its more fundamental sense. His book is in fact a prolonged speculation on the possible nature of the fundamental biochemical lesion in rheumatoid arthritis. As there is really no clue as to what this might be, the book rather lacks a continuous theme, and is a collection of disparate chapters, each dealing with particular biochemical systems. Thus we have proteoglycans, enzymes, amino acids, trace elements, and so forth, to each of which is devoted a review of work done in the field, and lines of possible future research are suggested. Again and again, however, Dr. West has to admit that the changes described do not appear peculiar to rheumatoid arthritis.

There is no detailed discussion of immunoglobulins or rheumatoid factor. All the book offers therefore is a collection of loose ends which the author hopes someone may be stimulated to tie up.

Anyone concerned with the biochemistry of the rheumatic diseases will find something to interest him here, but it is difficult to avoid the impression that although the topic as approached by Dr. West would make a good review article, it is somewhat overstretched as a book.  

**JOHN R. DALY**

**Rehabilitation of the Severely Disabled.**


These books are based on the experience gained at Mary Marlborough Lodge, the Disabled Living Research
Unit at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Oxford. Such assessment and training units have an essential role to play in the rehabilitation of hospital patients, helping them to achieve as much independence as possible, but the results are difficult to measure in simple numerical terms.

In the first volume the authors have chosen to present the results of a detailed follow-up of 200 patients, eighteen of whom had rheumatoid arthritis. This does not make easy reading, but the information collected provides a very necessary backcloth to the second more useful volume on 'Management'.

In this volume there are separate sections on the special problems presented by some of the common disabling diseases. Nine pages are devoted to rheumatoid arthritis but much of this is taken up with a simple account of the treatment of this condition and an illustrative case history. One feels that in future editions this section might be expanded with profit to show some of the special problems that the rheumatoid patient encounters.

One of the best sections in the book comprises the chapters on wheelchairs and powered vehicles, which should be compulsory reading for all trainees in the speciality of rheumatology. 30,000 new wheelchairs are issued by the Department of Health and Social Security each year and at least one-third of these are returned, or not used, as they are unsuitable for the patient. This failure rate can be reduced by holding wheelchair clinics, where a doctor or therapist, together with the technical officer from the Ministry, interviews patients, selects the chair most suited to their needs, and decides on what modifications are needed.

Finally, the sections on gardening for the disabled is full of very useful information which it is difficult to obtain elsewhere and, contrary to what one might at first expect, this can often provide a worthwhile hobby for the patient crippled by arthritis.

E. B. D. HAMILTON


There is a need for a compact and authoritative book on clinical rheumatology which a wide range of doctors and senior medical students could turn to for guidance in the diagnosis and management of the very numerous patients suffering from rheumatic complaints.

In addition to a concise account of the major rheumatic diseases and some mention of the numerous less common rheumatic syndromes, such a book should help the reader to recognize the various rheumatic diseases in their earliest stage when diagnosis is notoriously difficult. It should also provide sound advice on the ascertainment and non-operative treatment of the large variety of mechanical and other problems which develop in individual joints and other structures in the later stages of most rheumatic diseases, and give guidance on how to deal with the complex psychological and socio-economic factors which are such an important component of the disability in many cases of chronic rheumatic disease.

Unfortunately the reader will find little useful information on these practical issues in this book.

There is no chapter on clinical method and no attempt is made to construct the kind of diagnostic flow chart which would be so helpful to the non-specialist. Treatment by drugs and surgical operations is adequately dealt with, but the general management of patients with rheumatoid arthritis is dismissed in two pages which are largely taken up by an illustration of the correct and incorrect posture in bed, which can hardly be described as a comprehensive account of this important subject. The section on individual joints is similarly uninformative. Though flexion deformity and instability of the knee in rheumatoid arthritis are described, only operative treatment for these disabilities is mentioned.

The text in general provides a curious mixture of clinical and pathological information which makes it hard for the reader to get a clear picture of either, and one gets the impression that the authors have been unable to digest adequately the large number of publications referred to after each chapter and have had insufficient clinical experience on which to base a satisfactory personal account of the subject. On the other hand this situation is redeemed by the inclusion of numerous excellent clinical photographs and radiographs which are the best feature of this book; these are well worth looking at, but more care and selectivity would have been welcome. Was it really necessary to show two figures of Kashin-Beck's disease in a book of this kind, and why take up nearly two pages in the chapter on extra-articular lesions in rheumatoid arthritis with radiographs of osteomalacia? Should the "biochemical abnormalities in alkappronuria (Fig. 16.4) be illustrated by a radiograph of the dorsal spine showing extensive bony bridging? And surely the chest radiograph in Fig. 16.6 need not have been shown upside down!

In spite of these minor defects the authors have produced a book which contains much information which candidates for the M.R.C.P. examination will find useful—but it would be unfortunate if this were to become the United Kingdom's standard text on rheumatology.

J. H. KELLGREN


Brief authoritative notes written and signed by experts on clinical aspects of rheumatic diseases have been accumulating since the first few were started in 1959, primarily to help non-specialists to keep up to date in the then new and expanding field of Rheumatology. That their worth was proven and the field was indeed growing rapidly was shown in the popularity of the last collection of 28 articles published in 1968.

The most recent collection provides 38 reports, of which the earlier ones have been revised, and includes three brief review sections on recent advances in Rheumatology, including surgical developments, from 1967 to the present.

A compact and clearly printed volume of 150 pages, offering a remarkably comprehensive coverage of the clinical features of the common rheumatic disorders
Rehabilitation of the Severely Disabled

E. B. D. Hamilton

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Updated information and services can be found at:
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