Book reviews


This is an excellent monograph on Sjögren’s Syndrome by a physician who has spent many years studying the problem. The historical outline is comprehensive and gives a very clear account of the development in knowledge of the syndrome. The difficult problem of definition of the disease is thoughtfully discussed, and the clinical features and associations of the condition are admirably reviewed. It is always easy to find criticism of any textbook, but this reviewer finds it impossible to fault the author in any major way. The book deals comprehensively with the less well-known aspects of the epidemiology of the disease and gives a balanced account of the association of the syndrome with other autoimmune diseases and with lymphoid malignancy. The section dealing with the renal complications of Sjögren’s syndrome is perhaps the best section of the book, as might be expected in view of Dr. Shearn’s major contribution to knowledge in this area. The recent discovery that NZB and NZB/NZW mice develop lesions in the lacrimal and salivary glands histologically resembling those of Sjögren’s syndrome is not only fully discussed but beautifully illustrated. Perhaps a more complete discussion of the role of the Gross strain of the murine leukaemia virus in the pathogenesis of the autoimmune disease of these mice would have been helpful. The reader is left with the impression that the autoimmune disease in these mice is transmissible with cell-free filtrates, but several groups of workers have failed to confirm these observations. Furthermore, the relevance of this work to the problem of the histological changes in the lacrimal and salivary glands is not clear, as Mellors, the only worker to succeed in transmitting the disease by cell-free filtrates, did not examine the lacrimal or salivary glands of the recipient mice. But this is a niggling point, which in no way detracts from the overall excellence of the book, which in addition to its comprehensive literature (579 references) is handsomely illustrated.

This book is an essential buy for every rheumatologist, and at £4.90 it is a bargain even for a Scotsman. As Sjögren’s syndrome is a common disease which frequently fails to be diagnosed by general physicians, it is clearly important for medical libraries to purchase this important book. The book will also be extremely useful to workers in the fields of ophthalmology, oral medicine, otolaryngology, immunology, and pathology.

W. W. Buchanan


The 16th volume of the Beiträge consists of five chapters entirely devoted to rheumatoid arthritits. The first contains a discussion on the morphology of the disease, a review of the literature in the preceding 5 years, and experimental investigations on morphology and immunology. The second, even larger, chapter contains a detailed study of adjuvant-induced arthritis in the rat. Though much of it will prove heavy reading for the clinician, it is, now and then, illuminated by a gleam of clinical interest, as in the finding that sixteen out of twenty rats with polyarthritis developed uveal tract inflammation (14 to 16 days after injection) and that 30 per cent. of animals with arthritis had balanitis (22 to 26 days after injection). The next section, on Felty’s syndrome, points out the relative rarity of this condition and notes that the five original cases described by Felty in 1924 had grown to a total of only seventy in the world literature by 1958. Yet, 2 years later, their number had swelled to 125—a rapid expansion which, the authors suggest, was due more to the greatly increased interest in rheumatology than to a spectacular rise in the incidence of the syndrome. In this chapter, too, they discuss the aetiology, pathogenesis, and treatment of the syndrome and its attendant problem, splenectomy.

The fourth chapter covers anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. The reader is guided through the complicated maze of biochemical action and choice of preparation by a number of descriptive Tables. For example, Table I classifies the properties of hydrocortisone, colchicine, salicylic acid, and phenylbutazone by their inhibition of inflammation, antirheumatic effect, antihistamine effect, inhibition of cellular oxidation, ATP-production, and proliferative processes, membrane effect, and metal-binding tendencies. Other Tables classify the various cortisone derivatives and give their dosage, compare the cytostatic effect of certain ‘antirheumatic’ agents on the Ehrlich-ascites tumour and mouse fibroblasts, and classify the better known cytostatic preparations according to their mode of action—antimetabolite, folic acid antagonism, purine antagonism, etc.

The final chapter deals with the antistreptolysin reaction and its evaluation by the albumin and dextran-sulphate methods. The great difference is stressed between a rise in the titre in children and adults. It is in the latter that nonspecific streptococci may intrude deceptively and require evaluation; the authors seem to prefer the dextran-sulphate method.

This volume retains the excellent format and quality of its predecessors. There is a table of contents and an ample international list of references at the end of each chapter, but no index. Its appeal will obviously be to the specialist rather than to the general physician, but the price of £6 for 184 pages in soft covers may surprise both.

David Preiskel


This definitive Brazilian textbook of the rheumatic diseases is of course of particular value for those who can read and understand the Portuguese language. The 1,372 pages are
shared by 69 authors, and are divided into 70 chapters, most of which have a lengthy up-to-date (1969) list of references, surveying, unlike some North American productions, the European as well as the North and South American literature. Except for a few indifferent colour plates, it is well illustrated with diagrams and photographs and covers the same general field as the textbooks by Copeman and by Hollander. Of interest to English readers is the discussion on two cases of articular toxoplasmosis described by Spilborghs. The two volumes are well edited by Hilton Seda.

E. G. L. BYWATERS


The causes of so many rheumatic diseases are not known, and because of this, perhaps also because treatment has fewer implications for medical economics under a State Health Service than under a private practice system, we in Great Britain have tended to undervalue the physical treatment of rheumatic diseases, or, at least, have been considered so to do by our colleagues on the Continent. This book, written by one who is, I believe, the only full-time Professor of Rheumatology in France with one of his colleagues, is of value to us in that it describes what is actually done in the way of physical treatment by the Toulouse School. The exposition is admirably clear and each section consists of a small description of disease as it affects each organ or joint, followed by a review of the treatments given. I suspect that the British reader will still find parts of it uncritical and unproven, but that is the nature of physical treatment. If you cannot prove it works, can you be sure it doesn’t work? Is it not time, moreover, that someone turned the coin over and looked at its other face: no-one has yet died of a surfeit of physiotherapy or hydrotherapy, but the same cannot be said of phenylbutazone, gold, steroids, etc., whose positive virtues have been emphasized in controlled clinical trials. Arlet and Mole’s book is well illustrated with two-colour diagrams which make the going easy even if the text is in French.

A. ST. J. DIXON


There are not many textbooks of rheumatology in the world today but this small book deserves to be compared with them. Although it is entitled “Treatment of Rheumatic Diseases”, the introductory half of each chapter is sufficiently comprehensive to act as a textbook and every chapter is followed by extensive reference lists, should the reader wish to study further. The 122 illustrations are black and white diagrams, space being saved by the elimination of photographs and by the use of a relatively small typeface. However, with good use of paragraphing and tabulation, the range of rheumatology is well presented, including back troubles and soft tissue rheumatism. Certain ‘diagnoses of convenience’ based on mythical pathology, such as fibrositis, which still find their way into English language textbooks, have been left out. Instead, the authors have had the courage to tackle the problem of psychogenic rheumatism and to lay down the criteria which should be present before this diagnosis is made. A book such as this is likely to have a wide appeal amongst Spanish-speaking rheumatologists.

A. ST. J. DIXON

**Note**

**South African Rheumatism and Arthritis Association**

The Third South African Rheumatism and Arthritis Conference will take place from July 19 to 22, 1972, at the University of the Witwatersrand. A major part of the proceedings will be centred on the single theme of arthritis in Africa. All interested medical and para-medical colleagues are welcome to attend and participate, and scientific contributions within the broad field of rheumatology are invited.

For further details please write to the Secretary, Rheumatism and Arthritis Conference, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Medical School, Hospital Street, Johannesburg. Telephone 724-1561, Ext. 337.