
This is the long awaited updated edition of Graham Hughes’ popular book on the connective tissue diseases. As with previous volumes, the book is divided into 15 chapters, covering most of the systemic connective tissue disorders from lupus to rare conditions such as angitis of the CNS. A whole chapter is also devoted to rheumatoid arthritis. A helpful appendix is included, giving a brief account of the methodology and the clinical significance of the more common immunological tests used in rheumatology.

A unifying format is used throughout the book: each chapter begins with an introduction, followed by a brief historical background, epidemiology, pathology, aetio-pathogenesis, clinical features, investigations, differential diagnoses, management, and ending with prognosis. The style is highly readable. The bibliography is comprehensive, and references to recent excellent review articles are included to whet the appetites of the more enthusiastic readers. In particular, I enjoyed the case histories, which help to bridge the gap between theory and clinical practice and would, I am sure, make the book attractive to medical students as well as novice rheumatologists.

The chapters are generally well illustrated but, unfortunately, no colour plates are included. Most of the chapters have been extensively updated, especially chapter 4, on the antiphospholipid syndrome. Systemic lupus is amply addressed. However, the repeated reference to antiphospholipid antibodies was rather tiresome. The unwary reader might be misled to think that lupus is caused by these antibodies! Overall, there is a heavy bias towards rheumatological practices in St Thomas’ Hospital and I was amused by the occasional unsubstantiated claims, for example, ‘septrin provocation test’ in the diagnosis of Sjögren’s syndrome.

Nevertheless, this book is a very useful first source of reference for students, scientists, and general physicians, as well as the budding rheumatologist. I can thoroughly recommend it for all with a passing, or even passionate, interest in the connective tissue diseases.
Connective tissue diseases

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