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Book review

Mercer's Orthopaedic Surgery. 8th Edn. By Robert B. Duthie and George Bentley. Pp. 1170. £75.00. Edward Arnold: London. 1983.

This is the eighth edition of an established orthopaedic textbook, which maintains its comprehensive account of locomotor disorders and their surgical management. Advances in bioengineering and radiology are included, although the impact of CT scanning could perhaps have been more fully evaluated. The text is well set out, with excellent line drawings and tables, although relatively few clinical photographs. The radiographs are, with a few exceptions, clearly reproduced. The initial sections are on a systematic pathological basis, and the later chapters cover the range of clinical disorders anatomically.

The book avoids the major defect of excessive overlap and repetition found in many large multiauthor texts. There is a clear index and an extensive bibliography at the end of each chapter. The price by present-day standards is reasonable. But should this be considered as an essential reference

book for any rheumatology library? From the rheumatologist's viewpoint it would have been useful to have seen a greater emphasis on the importance of a team approach to the problems of the rheumatoid patient. There is insufficient appraisal of the planning of orthopaedic intervention as one episode in a continuing long-term management programme. The value of synovectomy is overemphasised. Simple errors appear in the section on 'Arthritis and rheumatic diseases'. Alclofenac is still mentioned as a first-line drug, penicillamine as an immunosuppressive agent, and phenylbutazone as a second-line drug. Furthermore it is worrying to see phenylbutazone advocated so prominently as a nonsteroidal agent, when considering the influence this may have on orthopaedic junior staff in particular.

These are, however, minor criticisms in a comprehensive and authoritative text, and as an up-to-date orthopaedic reference book it probably ranks as one of the best available.

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