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- 4 Greulich W W, Pyle S I. *Radiographic atlas of skeletal development of the hand and wrist*. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.

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Book reviews

Mathematical Models in Medical Diagnosis. By M Clinton Miller III, Milton C Westphal Jr, John Routt Reigart II. Pp. 187. £25.50. Praeger: New York. 1981.

This book is unlikely to be directly helpful to the clinician. Apart from a reasonable explanation of the principles of cluster analysis, the general approach is very mathematical and abstract. Even for those whose interests lie in the manipulation of clinical data much of the book might prove hard going.

Statisticians, on the other hand, will find that each chapter ends just when the mathematical problems become interesting.

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Arthritis and Allied Conditions. 10th edn. Ed. Daniel J McCarthy. Pp. 1750. US \$121.00. Lea and Febiger: Philadelphia. 1985.

Rheumatologists who like to keep their reference books up to date may regret that those responsible for producing the two major North American texts did not contrive to stagger the two new editions. As it is, this 10th edition of 'Hollander' arrives almost simultaneously with the second edition of the large textbook edited by Kelley, Harris, Ruddy, and Sledge. The editors on the other hand will, I suspect, give a hollow laugh at the suggestion that it lies within their power to control accurately when the books will appear.

The cover of this new edition is in gold. Curiously this is not to celebrate its 50th birthday, for the first edition of 'Comroe' appeared in 1940. It is, as Dan McCarthy explains in his Preface 'to symbolise the current status of the clinical discipline'. However, while seeking to present the very latest state of the specialty, the past is not forgotten, and the Foreword is written by the distinguished previous editor, Dr Joseph Lee Hollander. His account of why he gave up after editing five editions has parallels with the hesitation of composers about completing a ninth symphony! Dr Hollander also contributes two chapters. In arguing again the case for the value of local corticosteroid injections he is now able to quote his personal experience of over 400 000 injections in over 12 000 patients during more than 32 years: 'No other form of treatment for

arthritis has given such consistent local symptomatic relief to so many for so long with so few harmful effects'.

How well does this large textbook serve its purpose? I have now had it on my shelf for six weeks and have used it both to browse and to check particular points, and I find it good - through and through. The size has crept up to nearly 1800 pages, but the publishers remarkably have succeeded in producing a volume which is manageable in the hand and which does not appear likely to start splitting out of its cover with use. The style of printing and layout are clear, and the illustrations mainly very adequate. A considerable improvement on previous editions is the more complete style of the references, giving both title and pagination.

As with previous editions this one provides a satisfactory balance between scientific background, systematic accounts of rheumatic diseases, and related laboratory and management matters. Two great virtues of this book are that, despite being very comprehensive, there is remarkably little overlap between authors, and the style of the writing is mainly excellent. By and large even the more basic scientific chapters are written sufficiently clearly and simply for the general reader to enjoy them. Reading about highly technical subjects can become very tedious when excessive use of jargon and abbreviations replaces clarity and simplicity. Fortunately there is very little of that in this book.

Is there anything to criticise? The only fault I could find concerned the index. Consulting the index is the starting point for much of the use that is made of a volume like this, so it should be good. Unfortunately most large multiauthor textbooks are indexed (as in this case, I suspect) by the publishers, who do not have the authors' insight into which words should be included. To take one small example at random: in Mart Mannik's excellent chapter on rheumatoid factors the author would have been in no doubt that the word 'antiglobulin' might provide a lead in to his subject for someone unfamiliar with the topic. Yet it does not appear in the index. I believe that good indexing is a neglected skill in medical publishing. In a multiauthor text there would appear to be excellent reasons for asking all authors to mark in their manuscripts each and every word that should appear in the index. The publisher can then do the rest.

However, the overall verdict must be that this edition represents a resounding triumph for both editor and publisher. No English speaking rheumatologist will want to be without ready access to a copy, and its usefulness will extend well beyond the specialty.

H L F CURREY