Notes and news

Musculoskeletal disorders

The International Skeletal Society is holding its 17th annual refresher course on musculoskeletal disorders from 12 to 15 September 1990, at the Salzburg Convention Center, Salzburg, Austria. The course will be accredited for 27 hours in category 1.

For more information please contact: Dawne Ryals, Ryals & Associates, PO Box 1925, Roswell, GA 30077-1925, USA. Tel (404) 641 9773. Fax (404) 552 9859.

Congress on inflammation

The first international congress on inflammation will be held from the 17 to 22 June 1990, in Barcelona, Spain, and it is proposed that this shall establish a biennial form of basic clinical research.

For further information please contact the Organizing Secretariat, ALM srl, Via Lattuada, 26, 20135 Milan, Italy.

Carol-Nachman award for rheumatology

The Carol-Nachman award for rheumatology 1991, Wiesbaden, FRG, will be awarded annually for excellent research in the field of rheumatology. It is endowed with DM 75 000.

Submission of work may be made up to 30 November 1990.

Further information from Professor Dr med D Maas, Rheumaklinik 1, Langgasse 38-40, D-6200 Wiesbaden, FRG.

Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology: symposium

To mark the 25th anniversary of its foundation the Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology is organising a two day symposium at the Royal Society, London, SW1, on the 19 and 20 July 1990. Many eminent speakers have been invited from the United Kingdom and overseas to address an audience of investigators in rheumatology on new developments in their field of research. There will be a fee of £75 with lunch at extra cost.

For further details please contact Mr C Boden, General Secretary, The Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology, 6 Bute Gardens, Hammersmith, London W6 7DW.

Book reviews

Rheumatic Diseases and the Heart. J A Cosh, J V Lever. (Pp 250; £49.50.) London: Springer, 1988. ISBN 3540-195-246.

There can be no doubt that the appearance of this book describing the interrelationship of cardiologic and rheumatologic disease is timely.

For the practising cardiologist the lack of new cases of rheumatic fever has led to a situation in which most new referrals with heart valve disease do not have this as a cause any longer. The universal availability of echocardiography, providing a non-invasive positive image of abnormal valves, has heightened awareness of this change, and cardiologists are more aware of rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, and scleroderma as causes of cardiac disorders.

The vulnerability of both the pericardium and myocardium to disease processes usually found in modern rheumatological practice has further strengthened the clinical links between the disciplines of cardiology and rheumatology. This particular marriage of interests is likely to endure for many years and texts such as this from Drs Cosh and Lever will prove welcome to specialists in both fields. Certainly, cardiologists will wish to be aware of the multisystem disorders affecting their patients. The rheumatological presentations of infective endocarditis or atrial myxomata are also important and well covered here. This is a scholarly book with extensive references, which have covered a wide range of interests.

It is always difficult to strike the right balance when one is seeking a worldwide readership. I really would have preferred rheumatic valve disease to have been relegated towards the end of the book rather than occupying the first two chapters as the contents of these chapters must be very well known to readers. The discussion of cardiac manifestations of modern rheumatological practice is where the strength of the text lies.

The sections on rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis are excellent and the illustrations in the text, both clinical and pathological, are of the highest quality. They are clearly reproduced and invariably relevant to the surrounding text.

The interrelationship between rheumatology and cardiology will undoubtedly continue to be important in the future. The authors are to be congratulated on their book, which will be of real value to most cardiac departments and candidates for Membership.

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Soft Tissue Rheumatism. ARC conference proceedings No 6. Eds B Hazleman, A Silman. (Pp 100; £5, postage £1.) London: Arthritis and Rheumatism Council for Research, 1989.

Few topics in the fuzzy world of rheumatology are as fuzzy as soft tissue disorders. The outback of rheumatic disease is ill defined, poorly explored and populated like any outback by a bunch of dogmatic roughnecks without much regard for the niceties of scientific scepticism. But it is a land also full of people suffering, who provide the major day to day concern for an industry of health care workers, including rheumatologists. It is an important clinical challenge to explore the problem with the clinical observation and logic needed to develop a deeper understanding and, hopefully, better control.

The report of the ARC conference on *Soft Tissue Rheumatism* is a step towards that. It is a collection of different author chapters covering regional problems, some disease concepts like sports injury and fibromyalgia, and a chapter on epidemiology. Each chapter is referenced. It reads, however, more as the summary of talks prepared before they were presented and not as the synopsis of discussion and thought on the topic as a result of the meeting. The report is short, but the abbreviated style makes for dry rather difficult reading.

The biggest problem is the subject. Reports so far are confusing and dogmatic and attempting to go forward from this base is starting in a mire. Several chapters fall into the trap of reiterating the dogmas uncritically. In contrast, Alan Silman

emphasises in a chapter on epidemiology the need for defining terms, going back to clinical observation, and defining outcome—not quite saying forget about the past and start afresh, but not far from that. Epidemiology is one methodology. Another is clinical trial, but the book does not emphasise which studies were controlled and which were not. A third problem is development of concepts. The chapter on fibromyalgia is an excellent review of a developing concept, which explores possible psychological, neurological, and viral abnormality, but puts it in the context of clinical observation and the controversy about its very existence. It highlights the experimental work of Kellgren and Lewis, confirmed later by Hockaday, on pain response to muscle injection with saline—experimental work, repeated by an independent observer and largely forgotten by the following generation of rheumatologists. A similar chapter on repetitive strain injury is sadly absent.

Next time we set off into the outback to investigate the unmanned frontier it would be helpful to remember the controlled trial—possibly send an epidemiologist. A look at the maps of those who have been before should induce a healthy scepticism of early explorers. The conference on soft tissue disorders goes some way towards getting that perspective, but sadly does not reference Norton Hadler's review of regional musculoskeletal disorders,¹ which gives a more balanced view, but is a more expensive guide.

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¹ Hadler N M. *Medical management of the regional musculoskeletal diseases*. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1984.

Anatomy and Human Movement: Structure and Function. N Palastanga, D Field, R Soames. (Pp 891; £60.) Oxford: Heinemann, 1989. ISBN 0-433-00032-5.

Anatomy is the foundation of any discipline involved with musculoskeletal disease. This book aims at teaching it as a living functional system and escape from the dissection manual. It aims at enabling people not able to dissect to have an understanding of structure. This is a formidable task and results in a book of nearly 900 pages.

There is an initial introduction to terminology, then a chapter describing the connective tissue components and giving a simplified description of musculoskeletal embryology. The bulk of the book is made up of two sections—firstly, anatomy of the upper limbs, and, secondly, with rather less space, anatomy of the head, neck, and trunk and of the nervous system.

Describing anatomy in text is difficult as the complex interrelations of structures and the problems of illustrating three dimensional structures passing through different depth planes in two dimensions are considerable. Conveying these structures to a student who has not had the privilege of studying anatomy by dissection or by demonstration from a cadaver is particularly difficult. The book is a bold attempt to achieve this. Its use of a combination of clear line diagrams and descriptive text goes a long way towards overcoming the inevitable limitations of trying to show the form of many structures and at the same time not lose clarity. There is considerable simplification of details, which makes it easier to read and provides a better visual demonstration of the structure, but this limits its value to the student of anatomy. The sections on muscle in the limbs are particularly well illustrated muscle by muscle. There are few diagrams showing the complex organisation of the components, however. The diagrams illustrating joints and ligaments which have been specifically emphasised are more difficult to follow. Those of the spine are more cramped and less clear.

Although the aim is to emphasise the analysis of movement,

the focus is very much on describing muscle, joints, and nerves. The sections integrating this form into functions are surprisingly short and are limited to simple activities with no attempt to analyse how complex movement is performed. There are some rather confusing details in omission. Illustration of power grip combines elements of pinch grip. The insertion of muscles is sometimes rather poorly drawn—for example, for flexor pollicis longus, apparently ending in the base rather than the tips of the fingers, and the distribution of sweat glands is confusing. x Ray reproduction is poor. There is no illustration of leg dermatomes. Much that is included in the text, like ossification dates, might have been abbreviated in tables, perhaps producing a lighter, more accessible, and easily carried book. The pages on pathology and anthropology are a diversion and are too scanty to support the theme of function.

The need of practitioners involved in manipulation is focused on by the inclusion of palpation in surface anatomy, an innovation for an anatomical text. At times it seems rather confusing and vague and perhaps would have been better as an integrated chapter describing how things may be felt and what may be felt on a regional basis rather than by description of each muscle in turn.

Paramedical health workers who learn their anatomy from textbooks are the most likely to find this book useful. It would make an excellent course book, filling the niche presently occupied by dissection manuals. For those who in their dim distant past had the privilege of learning anatomy by dissection it is an easy to read well illustrated reminder of anatomical basics, but it is not a text aimed at analysing the anatomical basis of movement as a scientific study. It is poorly referenced. For those involved in the study of anatomy or the medical and surgical treatment of musculoskeletal disease the scope of the book is, sadly, too limited.

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Methotrexate Therapy in Rheumatic Disease. Ed William S Wilke. (Pp 336; \$119.50.) New York: Marcel Dekker, 1989. ISBN 0-8247-8115-5.

The first in a series of monographs entitled *Inflammatory Disease and Therapy*, this book is intended for doctors, rheumatologists, and related research scientists. It succeeds in providing in one volume a comprehensive account of the use of methotrexate in inflammatory rheumatic disease.

The book is divided into four sections. Firstly, there is an excellent historical account of the use of methotrexate in rheumatology, accompanied by two clear chapters on the general pharmacology of methotrexate and of low dose methotrexate in particular. The second section deals with the various clinical studies, both controlled and uncontrolled, and includes a chapter on the European experience by two German authors. Section three covers the toxicity of methotrexate in rheumatoid arthritis with detailed sections on hepatic toxicity in both rheumatoid arthritis and psoriasis, as well as discussion of the mechanisms of methotrexate hepatic toxicity. The section ends with a useful chapter by the editor on the practical considerations of methotrexate treatment. The last brief section considers methotrexate in other inflammatory arthropathies.

This is a well produced volume with references up to 1988, and I recommend it as a worthwhile purchase to provide an up to date account of the use of methotrexate in rheumatology and rheumatoid arthritis in particular. Given the cost, this probably means purchase for the departmental library rather than by the individual.

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