that electromyography has little to offer in the management of spinal disease.

Treatments both traditional and unconventional are all extensively reviewed and a lot of common sense advice on the management of neck pain is provided but, as one reads, it becomes very clear that, despite being a frequent source of pain, the cervical spine is a sadly neglected area in the field of research.

Conclusion—an excellent browse and a good reference book to have in the department or library. If I can persuade you to get hold of a copy of this book, may I also recommend that you read the preface and introduction, which alone are worth buying the book for.

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The management of common metabolic bone disorders.

Gordon Campbell, Juliet Compston, Adrian Crisp. (Pp 180; hardback £37.50; paperback £14.95.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. ISBN hardback 0-521-43037-2; paperback 0-521-43623-0.

The target audience for this book is wide, the authors hoping that it will appeal to consultants and senior registrars in general medicine, geriatric medicine, rheumatology, endocrinology, and orthopaedic surgery, and to general practitioners. In this small book they provide an excellent introduction to the management of metabolic bone disorders. Following the first chapter, which covers pathogenesis and investigation of metabolic bone disease, the book is reasonably weighted with regards to the space given for the conditions covered. Thus the largest chapter is that for osteoporosis, with a good section on hormone replacement therapy. The omission of a specific section on steroid induced osteoporosis is disappointing, and the difficulties in management of this important cause of osteoporosis mentioned only in passing. The chapter on Paget's disease is comprehensive and well written, reflecting its author's experience and enthusiasm for the disorder. The remaining chapters are equally well written and cover osteomalacia, hypercalcaemic states (concentrating on primary hyperparathyroidism and hypercalcaemia of malignancy), hypocalcaemic disorders (including renal osteodystrophy), and concluding with a short chapter on rare diseases which may present with fractures.

Throughout the book there are practical comments with indications and dosage recommendations for drugs which are in keeping with current knowledge. The chapters are structured and well illustrated. References are sparse, but this book is meant to be a source of practical information rather than references, and will appeal to all, particularly those who want a book which is easy to read and which covers common clinical problems in the field.

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SANJEEV PATEL

Epidemiology of the rheumatic diseases. Alan J Silman, Marc C Hochberg. (Pp 504; £60.00). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. ISBN 0 19 262356 7.

The last comprehensive text on this subject covering the rheumatic diseases was by Lawrence and published 17 years ago. A comparison between these two texts tells us quite a lot about which areas of epidemiological research have progressed and which have remained fairly stagnant. There has been disappointingly little movement in subjects such as the seronegative arthropathies, ankylosing spondylitis and back pain, but many recent advances in osteoarthritis and osteoporosis. The book, however, is a vast improvement on

Lawrence's text. It is far more 'user-friendly', easier to read, and each chapter contains invaluable referenced summary tables of published work on its subject.

Generally the book is well referenced and reasonably up to date. The authors have relied on four additional contributors for some of the chapters. Although this provides additional expertise and these chapters are of high quality (particularly the section on soft tissue rheumatism by Peter Croft), some are over long and don't always fit in with the general pattern and feel of the book.

I was surprised by the omission of some information on diseases which would have been useful to the rheumatologist such as Paget's disease, the vasculitides and others of the rarer connective tissue diseases. Even if little is known of these conditions, a small section on the limits of our knowledge would have been helpful.

Overall, however, the book has a good feel about it and is easy to 'dip' into; rheumatologists will also find it an invaluable source of reference for estimates of prevalence of disease and the role of risk factors. I would recommend it for all academic rheumatology units.

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T D SPECTOR

Autoimmune connective tissue diseases. Eds M A Khamashta, J Font, G R V Hughes. (Pp 266; £56.00.) Ediciones Doyma, 1993 (distributed by BMJ Publishing Group, London). ISBN 84-7592-513-8.

As befits its provenance, this book has a predominance of authors (25 of 47) from Spain. It reflects the established personal links between the St Thomas's Hospital unit and colleagues in that country, but also the recently expanding and welcome contributions from Spain to the international medical literature. That such contributions are increasingly in English reflects the power of the American biomedical establishment. Although English is the second language of perhaps two-thirds of the contributors, on the whole the book reads well. Errors are probably no more frequent than in some primarily English language texts and include 'Grotton's' papules and 'coexistence' (page 142), 'creatinine' in place of 'creatinine' (page 199) and an inconsistent use of 'serologic' and 'serological' (I favour the latter, pushing back American usage).

There is overlap, perhaps inevitable in discussion of this cluster of syndromes which conventionally need a special category, 'Overlaps,' to satisfy the pigeon-holers. Thus discussion of anti-phospholipids and anti-neutrophil antibodies features in more than one chapter, as does cytostatic drug therapy. Some may feel a little short changed as regards laboratory science, others that the subject of therapeutics is somewhat compressed. In contrast, I thought the reviews of interleukins and idiotypes provided excellent introductions to complex areas. For the clinician, or possibly the interested bench scientist, there is plenty to ponder on, such as the thoughtful sections on infection, pregnancy and SLE itself. Phospholipids receive commendably restrained but useful attention. The treatment section is covered in two sequential chapters, but might still be thought to fall between being an overview and a clinical manual.

There are few references more recent than 1990, which illustrates the problem of a text which is something between a reference book and a review. Perhaps CDROM technology will soon enable us to receive regular supplements in the form of one of the several review journals specifically linked to a small textbook such as this. It is nevertheless difficult to find serious fault with this useful addition to the bookshelf.

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