The book is lacking in other important areas, notably the immunopharmacology of those drugs already used in the treatment of rheumatic diseases. The authors state in their preface that "it can be argued that the major advances in the treatment of inflammatory arthritic diseases . . . sprang from the discovery of corticosteroids". It is perhaps somewhat surprising, therefore, that in this volume these drugs are barely mentioned! Another surprising omission, particularly in view of the inclusion of two chapters on the enzymatic destruction of bone and cartilage, which can barely be construed as immunological, is the absence of any significant contribution on free radicals.

In summary, rather than a clearly focused book, this is a collection of reviews of somewhat loosely connected areas. My advice to prospective readers would be to borrow a copy and to read the chapters in which they are interested, each of which can be considered as an authoritative review of its particular areas. However, I doubt that anybody, particularly a newcomer to the field, would find in this volume the comprehensive review of the field to which the series aspires.

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GABRIELLE KINGSLEY

Rheumatology. Eds J H Klippel, P A Dieppe. (Pp 1766; £195.00). London: Times Mirror International, 1993. ISBN 0 397 44731 0.

Why buy a new textbook on rheumatology? The information contained in it is often available in more up-to-date form in monographs and original papers, and the cost is increasingly a major disincentive. *Rheumatology*, however, manages to quell all such thoughts. Put simply, this is a superb textbook which manages amply to demonstrate how such textbooks can survive into the electronic age.

The first thing that strikes one about the book is its high production values and sheer visual attractiveness. As the figure demonstrates, the excellent illustrations and widespread use of colour appeal to the eye and make browsing a pleasure. The colour coding of the chapters, whilst a little unfamiliar at first, enable the reader rapidly to look up both specific topics and more general sections. In addition, each chapter has a very structured layout enabling one to find out rapidly about particular areas of each disease, for example epidemiology, investigations etc.

Generally the content is broad and comprehensive, which means that the book will serve as a ready reference for both the practising rheumatologist and those from other specialties who require access to authoritative information. It is well written with a friendly, easy-to-read style which should encourage use by students. The structured layout also means that authors have not avoided issues with which they are uncomfortable in order to concentrate on pet topics or minutiae. Indeed, for those interested, there are valuable chapters on joint physiology and biomechanics, history, embryology etc. Disease mechanisms and pathology are also well covered, but the well designed and structured layout enable those seeking a more clinical approach to move quickly through these, unrestricted by a mass of information, to get to the practical pearls. There are nevertheless a few areas that are less well covered, for example the extra-articular manifestations of rheumatoid arthritis.

The use of sections devoted to practical problems is a very attractive and interesting part of the book. Topics as diverse as *instability of the cervical spine*, *painful implants*, *shoulder pain in the elderly* and *drugs in OA*; *treating the elderly patient* are tackled in a way that illuminates important clinical problems, gives a pragmatic approach, and highlights areas of controversy.

If there are criticisms, these are mainly the result of the multiple authorship. There are different views expressed

Representative page from Klippel and Dieppe's *Rheumatology*.

regarding management, for example, and the international flavour of the authorship means that treatment modalities may not always reflect local practice. For example, in the section on rheumatoid arthritis, sulphasalazine is perhaps given less emphasis than would reflect its use in the UK. These are minor points, however, and are bound to arise in any large international textbook on a subject in which consensus is always hard to achieve. Indeed, the editors are to be praised for attracting such a diverse spread of international figures and achieving such a broad coverage of topics.

One could argue that this book is not filling a gap in the market, as it is competing with several well-established texts. In our opinion, however, this book takes on the established names extremely well and in terms of presentation and visual impact has no serious rival. Although expensive, the cost does not appear excessive given the quality of the finished product and, all in all, the editors have succeeded in producing an excellent, very attractive book which should be on the shelves of every rheumatologist and in every departmental library.

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Oxford textbook of rheumatology. Eds P J Maddison, David A Isenberg, Patricia Woo, David N Glass. (Pp 1192 in 2 Vols; £120.00.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. ISBN 0 19 262026 6.

It has been apparent for some time that there was a gap in the market for a modern 'British' textbook covering the rheumatic diseases. This required an editorial board with sufficient energy and enthusiasm to complete such a project. The editors should be congratulated on achieving their aim. Now the reader is spoilt for choice with the near simultaneous launch of two works, *The Oxford Textbook* and Klippel and Dieppe's *Rheumatology*.