

BOOK REVIEWS

Les anomalies congénitales de la charnière cervico-occipitale. (Congenital Anomalies of the Cervico-Occipital Junction). By STANISLAS GODLEWSKI and J. DRY (1964). Pp. 54, 33 figs, bibl. Expansion Scientifique Française, Paris.

To those concerned with the neurological and vascular complications of arthritis and disk disease in the neck, this booklet will make interesting background reading. It comprises a review of sixty patients with important congenital malformations of the upper cervical spine which brings up to date the collected observations at the Neurological Clinic of the *Hôpital Salpêtrière* (under Prof. R. Garcin). It concerns basilar impression (44), occipitalization of the atlas (23), cervical block vertebrae (15), hypoplasia, separation, or dislocation of the odontoid process (15), and cervical spina bifida (6). (Many patients had more than one anomaly.)

The first section presents a clear exposition of the anatomy of the anomalies studied and emphasizes the differences between basilar impression and platybasia together with the various x-ray techniques and measurements which have been designed to detect and differentiate these conditions. Block vertebrae in the neck were seldom of themselves associated with neurological complications but one case illustrated the tendency to premature and exaggerated disk arthrosis at the junction of two stiff segments of the cervical spine which might cause local narrowing of the spinal canal. Anomalies of the odontoid process (which are potentially serious because they may lead to dislocation of the neck) might require tomography in various positions to visualize them clearly.

The second section describes the associated neural, arterial, and meningeal lesions, from the Arnold-Chiari malformation and Dandy Walker syndrome to less serious anomalies. Vertebral angiography may show changes in the course of the posterior inferior cerebellar artery (the "loop sign").

The third section lists briefly the congenital malformations elsewhere which have been associated with maldevelopment of the neck, and the fourth summarizes the various clinical pictures. The tendency to recurrent "cervical crises" is stressed, exemplified by eight patients who noted attacks of pain, paraesthesiae, vertigo, and incoordination suggesting transient ischaemia of the cord. In some this occurred before there were any permanent neurological signs. Most commonly the patients presented with pyramidal and cerebellar signs in the lower limbs, associated with hypoaesthesia and stereo-anaesthesia in the upper limbs resembling disseminated sclerosis. Almost as common were signs suggesting syringomyelia or syringobulbia in some patients and pressure cone in others, or attacks of vertigo suggesting cerebellar or labyrinthine disease in yet others.

A fifth section deals briefly with contrast myelography and air encephalography, and the sixth with surgical intervention, mainly operations to decompress the cord or to stabilize dislocating segments of the cervical spine.

A. ST. J. DIXON.

L'actualité rhumatologique, 1964-1965. (The Practice of Rheumatology, 1964-1965.) By S. DE SÈZE, A. RYCKEWAERT, C. GUÉRIN, and M. F. KAHN (1965). Pp. 380. Expansion Scientifique Française, Paris.

Semiología de los reumatismos. (Diagnosis in Rheumatic Diseases.) By J. ROTÉS-QUEROL, E. LIENCE, and D. ROIG ESCOFET (1964). Pp. 661. Espasx, Barcelona.

In Continental Europe rheumatology has separated rather further than in Great Britain as a specialty distinct from general medicine. As Prof. de Sèze remarks in his preface, whether one deplors it or not, specialties in medicine are gaining ground at the expense of general medicine and general practice because only the specialist can keep up to date with the advance of knowledge in any particular field. Both of these books represent professional rheumatology at its best, both will make considerable impact, and neither has an exact English language equivalent. At this point the resemblance between them ends.

The book by de Sèze and his colleagues is the first of an annual series of paperback reviews of rheumatology. It opens with a section which deals with inflammatory rheumatism and includes chapters on malignant rheumatoid arthritis, the pulmonary manifestations of rheumatoid arthritis, laryngeal involvement in rheumatoid arthritis, the joint manifestations of the carcinoid syndrome, Whipple's disease, and relapsing polychondritis. The second section deals with degenerative diseases of the joints and spine. Lequesne and Teyssandier's chapter on osteochondromatosis of the hip, with arthrographic studies, deserves special mention. A chapter by Glimet and de Sèze sheds new light on why the patello-femoral articulation is the commonest site for osteoarthrosis of the knee, although this is not the weight-bearing section of the joint. Detailed measurements have shown that the combination of a large patella associated with a small radius of curvature in the sagittal plane of the anterior (patella-articulating) surface of the femur is common dysplasia which leads to excessive local pressure and predisposes to osteoarthrosis. The reverse situation protects against it. The next section deals with extra-articular rheumatism and includes a beautifully illustrated chapter on the acroparaesthesiae of the upper limb. Another section deals with the morbid physiology of acute gouty arthritis, the diagnostic value of hyperuricaemia, and the articular and osseous manifestations of diabetes and haemachromatosis. This is followed by sections on metabolic bone disease, and on various aspects of drugs used in the treatment of rheumatism. A section of surgery in rheumatic diseases is notable for two chapters by J. Debeyre on the surgical treatment of primary necrosis of the femoral head (by pinning the sequestrum) and on the indications for vertebral bone grafts in the treatment of painful back. The final section deals with miscellaneous conditions, including carcinomatous neuro-myopathy, chondrocalcinosis, viral arthropathies, pigmented villonodular synovitis, and the post-radiational necrosis of bones and joints.