

Book reviews

Mercer's Orthopaedic Surgery. By R. B. DUTHIE and A. B. FERGUSON JR. 7th ed., 1973. Pp. 1236, 737 figs, 52 tab., index. Arnold, London (£25)

The standard reference textbook in any subject is a great responsibility for the author, particularly in a specialty expanding as rapidly as orthopaedics. The new edition of 'Mercer's Orthopaedics' is the first after the author's death and the editorship is now shared between Prof. R. B. Duthie, whose name is already associated with this textbook, and Prof. A. B. Ferguson. Both these people are internationally respected Orthopaedic Surgeons who jointly are able to bring a transatlantic approach to this edition.

In a subject as changing as orthopaedics, a textbook is almost out of date at the time of its publication, but the editors have very sensibly taken a conservative approach and their thoughts on aetiology, pathology, and management reflect established fact rather than up-to-date theory.

The chapter on the Basic Sciences has been re-written and considerably enlarged to include not only the anatomy and physiology of bone but also its biochemistry and mechanisms of calcification. A section on Joint Lubrication and Fractures is also included. This chapter is a good introduction to Orthopaedics for the undergraduate, and for the postgraduate student there is a thorough discussion of the fundamentals of his specialty, with a good reference section to support further reading. The section on the Congenital Deformities and Diseases of Development of Bone have been brought up to date and the bibliography enlarged. It is interesting to note how little alteration in the discussion of the Club Foot has occurred despite many new papers on the subject. This possibly reflects the maturity of the authors in their belief that treatments for this condition merely pass through unsatisfactory phases.

To the readers of a Journal concentrating mainly on arthritis and rheumatism, the sections on Acute Arthritis remains an up-to-date account of the manifestation and management of these diseases. The section on the Chronic Arthritides might be regarded as a little short for the student of this subject. As in the Club Foot problem, changes are so rapid and transitory that maturity in authorship is required to sift temporary enthusiasm from long-term contribution. The chapters deal with the observed facts linking the natural history and prognosis in the consideration of both medical and surgical treatment. The management of the rheumatoid knee is well reviewed as is also the section on Osteoarthritis of the Hip. Both sections emphasize the problems associated with total joint replacements providing a note of caution to an operation which has achieved epidemic popularity in the past few years.

The last two chapters deal with the important subjects of Amputations and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. The latter, which is new to this edition, is written by P. J. R. Nichol who is an authority in this field. This subject is usually badly considered in orthopaedic textbooks and it is refreshing to read an up-to-date account of the principles of physical medicine and rehabilitation in which 'slap and tickle' is regarded as a treatment of the past. Physiotherapists may hope that Orthopaedic and Rheumatological Registrars may read the section and then review the criteria for the treatments that they advise.

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Rheumatology. An Annual Review. Vol. 4. Oculo-cutaneous Manifestations of Rheumatic Diseases. Edited by G. E. EHRLICH. 1973. Pp. 146, 54 figs, 9 tab. Karger, Basel (£7.60)

The systemic manifestations of rheumatic diseases are protean and always excite interest. In particular, lesions of the eyes, oral mucosa, and skin are readily apparent. Their appearance often leads to confusion in defining criteria for separating different syndromes. This has led Prof. Ehrlich, in an interested introduction, to speculate whether the differentiation of rheumatic diseases is meaningful and whether some might better be regarded as 'interfaces' between two disorders showing features of both.

In the chapter on ocular involvement, Prof. P. Henkind and Dr. D. H. Gold describe in great detail the changes complicating the rheumatic diseases and occurring as a result of treatment. In particular, there is a critical analysis of the data regarding blindness complicating polymyalgia rheumatica and temporal arteritis. Lacking, however, is much information on the pathology and pathogenesis of ocular complications.

The mouth contains a rich diversity of supportive, connective, vascular, and epithelial structures, so that it is hardly surprising that oral mucosal manifestations occur in rheumatic diseases. Dr. N. A. Cummings divides these into four groups.

First, there are those in which oral involvement is a necessary feature of the disease—Sjögren's syndrome and Behçet's syndrome. Second, there are the syndromes which have frequent and significant oral involvement—systemic lupus erythematosus, Reiter's syndrome, and systemic sclerosis. Third, there are those diseases in which oral manifestations may be present but are uncommon or not significantly related to the underlying condition. Fourth, there are the oral complications of drug therapy.

In each case there is a very careful clinical description. For example, it was most valuable to learn how to distinguish the forms of mucosal ulceration in Behçet's syndrome, Reiter's syndrome, and SLE.