Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases, 1977, **36**, 595

Book reviews

Purine Metabolism in Man—II. Edited by Mathias M. Müller, Erich Kaiser, and J. Edwin Seegmiller. (Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology). *Vol. 76A: Regulation of Pathways and Enzyme Defects.* (pp. xxii+641; illus.+tables. US $49·50.) *Vol. 76B: Physiology, Pharmacology, and Clinical Aspects.* (pp. xxii+373; illus.+tables. US $35.00.) Plenum Publishing: New York. 1977.

Such is the rapid accumulation of new knowledge on purine metabolism that 3 years after the publication of *Purine Metabolism in Man* in 1974 we now have *Purine Metabolism in Man—II.* This 2-volume edition is the summary of the Second International Symposium on Purine Metabolism in Man, held at Baden, Vienna, Austria, June 20–26, 1976. The editors are to be congratulated on producing the two volumes within a year of the meeting.

The first volume deals with the metabolic pathways in purine metabolism, effects of mutations, immunological aspects, the relationship between uric acid and carbohydrate and lipid metabolism, and methods of assay of purines. Of particular interest is the work being done on the deficiencies of adenosine deaminase and purine nucleoside phosphorylase: deficiency of the former has been found in association with combined immunodeficiency and the latter with T cell dysfunction.

The second volume deals with the renal handling of urate in both man and animals, biochemical pharmacology, the mechanism of gouty inflammation, effects of nutritional states on purine metabolism, and various clinical and therapeutic aspects of purine metabolism. There is a plethora of new information and of particular interest are the papers on the relevance of protein adsorption to monosodium urate crystals in the pathogenesis of the acute gouty attack.

These two volumes should be read by every rheumatologist. It is unlikely that all the information will be retained, there being so much of it, but at least having completed the task the reader will have the satisfaction of being up-to-date with all the recent work in this exciting field. If the reader himself does not purchase the two volumes then he should at least ensure that his medical library does.

The publication has been achieved by a photographic technique. The typed scripts have simply been photographed and reproduced. This seems eminently sensible, but it might be useful if editors of subsequent publications requested contributors to use standard English, and to present their references in the same way. This would facilitate reading. But these are minor points and should not detract from the excellence of the volumes.

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Non-articular Forms of Rheumatoid Arthritis. *Proceedings of the IV I.S.R.A. Symposium, The Hague, October 20 and 21, 1976.* Edited by T. E. W. Feltkamp. (pp. 260; illustrated+tables. US $ 30.00.) Stafleu: Leiden. 1977.

This, 'World Rheumatism Year', is the fiftieth anniversary of the Netherlands League against Rheumatism, which was one of the founder members of the International Study Centre for the Rheumatic Diseases, Amsterdam. The purpose of this study centre is the stimulation of research in rheumatic diseases and this symposium reports recent work at an international level on the nonarticular forms of rheumatoid arthritis.

For the clinician there is a good review of the present knowledge on heart and lung involvement in rheumatoid arthritis with useful information about two potentially lethal conditions, constrictive pericarditis and aortic valve disease. The clinical aspects of neuropathy in rheumatoid arthritis are comprehensively reviewed and recent histochemical and electron microscope findings in sural nerve biopsies are presented. The ocular complications of rheumatoid arthritis are discussed with particular reference to diseases of the sclera and cornea; and Sjøgren's syndrome with its wide involvement of various organs receives detailed attention.

The long discussed question of specific 'rheumatoid' involvement of the kidney is apparently unsolved, but information on serial renal biopsies in gold nephropathy and the vexed question of analgesic nephropathy receives authoritative discussion by experts in the field. Also of interest is the well illustrated section on the ultrastructural change in muscle pathology in rheumatoid arthritis and the description of a new form of proximal myopathy occurring in a small series of rheumatoid patients from Sweden.

Vasculitis would seem to be the culprit in many forms of nonarticular rheumatoid arthritis and suggestions are made about the clinical and pathophysiological relevance of immune complexes. It was agreed that the major role in initiating extra-articular lesions in rheumatoid disease should be attributed to immune complexes, but further studies of lymphocytes, endothelial, and other cellular features were considered important.

This soft cover volume is attractively produced and some sections are followed by a discussion with an attempt to find areas of agreement. Colour plates would have improved the clinical and immunological photographs and there are a number of spelling mistakes. However, this is more than made up for by the text, tables, and figures which are arranged in sequence so avoiding the sometimes frustrating search to correlate text and tables. This symposium gives a useful up-to-the-minute account by an international group of workers of the non-articular aspects of rheumatoid arthritis. It provides a good balance to the considerable attention that has been given to the joint in rheumatoid arthritis, and perhaps further research in this direction combined with investigation of articular pathology will eventually elucidate the cause of rheumatoid 'disease'.

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Ann Rheum Dis: first published as 10.1136/ard.36.6.595 on 1 December 1977. Downloaded from http://ard.bmj.com/ on April 23, 2024 by guest. Protected by