

# Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases

---

A journal of clinical rheumatology and  
connective tissue research

*Editor* J. T. Scott

*Associate Editors* H. L. F. Currey V. Wright

*Editorial Committee*

B. M. Ansell John Ball C. G. Barnes E. G. L. Bywaters  
A. M. Denman J. T. Dingle A. St. J. Dixon D. C. Dumonde  
R. B. Duthie D. L. Gardner L. E. Glynn E. B. D. Hamilton  
E. J. Holborow D. Jackson A. G. Mowat G. Nuki  
K. W. Walton P. H. N. Wood

*Editor British Medical Journal*

Appointed by the British Medical Association and the  
Arthritis and Rheumatism Council for Research

---

**VOLUME 38, 1979**

---

LONDON  
BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
TAVISTOCK SQUARE WC1H 9JR

## Book review

**Ankylosing Spondylitis — Discussions in Patient Management.** By A. Calin and J. F. Fries. (Pp. vi + 117; illustrated + tables. £7.50.) Henry Kimpton: London. 1978.

Ankylosing spondylitis has assumed particular significance in recent years in view of its central importance in the concept of seronegative spondylarthritides (spondylarthritides, spondyloarthritides). In this small but compact book the disease is discussed under sections detailing history, criteria for classification, genetics, pathology, clinical assessment and diagnosis, systemic features, radiology, and management. There is also an interesting chapter on the spondylarthritides. Indeed, the comprehensive coverage of the book is hardly represented by its title which implies coverage of management only.

The authors emphasise and re-emphasise the fact that ankylosing spondylitis is a commoner disorder than has been previously thought, and one which remains frequently undiagnosed, particularly in women. This is due to a tendency among

clinicians and radiologists to look for the textbook picture of the disorder and to overlook more subtle clinico-radiological features of the early presentation. Other points stressed include the fact that spondylitis is a gratifying condition to diagnose, as much can be done to alleviate it. Objectivity in the clinical assessment of the patient is fully discussed, although there are minor inaccuracies in quoting from some of the references cited. The authors also draw attention to the importance of simple radiological assessment of the sacro-iliac joints in order to make a definitive diagnosis of ankylosing spondylitis. They rightly stress the point that tests for the specific antigen HLA-B27 should not be used as a routine in diagnosis.

These and many other messages are nicely consolidated in a series of 17 case histories.

For a book of just over 100 pages it is well documented with 122 references, a third of which are within 4 years of publication. Despite one or two errors of

syntax and spelling the book is well written and clearly discusses the more controversial issues as well as the established facts.

The illustrations, which are all radiographs, cover important points in diagnosis and differential diagnosis. These include a valuable diagnostic series showing increasing grades of sacroiliitis, and the main points of distinction between spondylitis, spondylosis, and ankylosing hyperostosis. A minor criticism is that the text might have been enhanced by one or two clinical photographs, particularly one showing the abnormal posture in spondylitis.

The spiral binding, poor cover design, soft covers, and typewritten text give the book a disappointing appearance. Doubtless these features were aimed at reducing the cost, but this still remains high considering the size of the book. However, despite these minor criticisms the book is warmly recommended for clinicians with a rheumatological interest.

J. M. H. MOLL

## Notes

### Heberden Library

The Heberden Librarian has been trying to build up a comprehensive collection of international rheumatism congress reports. It still lacks the following recent congress reports and abstracts, and the Librarian (Professor E. G. L. Bywaters) would be most grateful if any of these could be supplied: *International League against Rheumatism*, San Francisco, 1977. *European League against Rheumatism*, Zurich, 1978. *Pan American League against Rheumatism*, 1st Congress, 1955, 5th Congress, 1971. *South-east Pacific League against Rheumatism*, 3rd Congress (Singapore), 1970. We lack in addition the published accounts of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th International Meeting (Paris, 1932, Moscow, 1934, Lund 1936).

### Fourth SEAPAL Congress

The 4th Congress of the South-east Asia and Pacific Area League Against Rheumatism will be held on 20–24 January 1980 in Manila, Philippines. Further information from Congress Office, Suite 216-B, UST Hospital, Manila, Philippines.