

It seems likely that many of the soft tissue changes described, such as joint effusions, enlarged lymph nodes, rheumatoid nodules, and oedema of the soft tissues, may be evident clinically, so that their demonstration by radiological means may not give additional information or help with the management of the patient. Indeed, one is left wondering about the practical importance of many of the changes described. However, there is no doubt that the radiology of the soft tissues has been neglected, and this book may well do something to overcome that deficiency.

J. W. LAWS

The Care of Rheumatic Children. Monograph Series No. 3. (Ed.) E. Munthe. Pp. 205. (No price). EULAR: Basle. 1978.

1977 was designated World Rheumatism Year. An EULAR and WHO workshop on the care of rheumatic children was held in Oslo with 140 participants, mostly from Europe, and this monograph summarises the various sessions and papers. The subjects covered include aspects of classification and diagnosis of juvenile chronic arthritis, its complications and prognosis, the current medical and surgical treatment, particularly synovectomy, and some organisational aspects of care. The first half of the monograph consists of 2- to 3- page summaries of the round table sessions written by an appointed member of each panel. It is a sensible and effective device for merging several papers and their discussion on a particular subject into a single balanced account.

The second half of the monograph consists of 97 abstracts of the individual papers, and the booklet concludes with an index. Primarily intended as a reminder for those who were present, it will also be of interest to those paediatric rheumatologists, especially outside Europe, who were unable to attend. They will welcome the survey of current work.

HERBERT BARRIE

Compendia Rheumatologica: Characteristic Features of the Most Important Rheumatic Diseases: A Practical Diagnostic Guide. Ed. H. Mathies. Pp. 98. No price. Eular Publishers: Basle. 1977.

This well produced booklet is said to be intended for the general practitioner. It covers the common rheumatic diseases and makes some reference to the rarer forms. It is written to some extent in note form with an appendix summarising the information. Its style might be described as 'problem orientated'. A brief description of the disease is followed by laboratory and radiological findings and then lists of findings which preclude, confirm, or cast doubt on the diagnosis, with advice about how the clinician should proceed.

It is well thought out, reasonably accurate, and generally non-controversial. Although it is short, it goes into a considerable amount of detail, frequently in the form of lists, which may not readily be understood or make easy reading for the general practitioner to whom it is aimed, who might well find that one of the shorter more orthodox textbooks in rheumatology would be more helpful.

I think it would be more likely to be of use to medical students than general practitioners, though it contains more detail than the average student in the UK would expect to acquire. For the rheumatologist it is an interesting approach to the subject, but he would be more likely to gain useful information elsewhere.

A. B. MYLES

Diseases of Connective Tissue. The Proceedings of a Symposium organised by the Royal College of Pathologists. Ed. D. L. Gardner. Pp. 241. £6.00. British Medical Association: London. 1978.

The Royal College of Pathologists sponsored this symposium in February 1978. The Proceedings are aimed at providing a selected and selective view of important contemporary areas of knowledge in a series of up-to-date authoritative reviews.

The material consists of 7 principal sections and 25 individual chapters. It is difficult to select individual chapters for mention. The first 2 sections consider the fundamental morphological features and properties of the cellular and extracellular materials making up connective tissues. The paper on basement membrane morphology, turnover, biochemistry, and metabolism (Ireland) provided information of particular value that is not otherwise readily available. The next section deals with fundamental disease mechanisms. Two of the chapters (Levene, and Pope and Nicholls) are on abnormalities of the collagen molecule, but there is considerable duplication between them. Under the heading of genetic disease there is a paper on the HLA system (Brewerton), but unfortunately only the briefest mention is made of the current studies of DR antigens in rheumatoid arthritis. In the mucopolysaccharidoses (Dean) replacement of the deficient enzymes can be achieved by transplanting histocompatible fibroblasts. The biochemical responses are described, but it is not clear whether this procedure is of clinical value. There is a series of papers on inflammation and fibrosis, and in each the authors have taken a challenging title, defending the thesis that rheumatoid arthritis is a virus disease (Denman), systemic lupus erythematosus is an immune disease (Holborow), and other topics. In a further section on structural and metabolic disease the authors have presented 'new knowledge' of other rheumatological topics such as connective tissue aging (Schofield and Weightman), osteoarthritis (Ali), intervertebral disc disease (Ball,) gout (Scott), and chondrocalcinosis (Dieppe). On the occasion of this meeting Charles Levene gave the Kettle memorial lecture on atherosclerosis, which is also produced here. Finally, the editor has brought together in a summary an attempt to rationalise the approach to connective tissue diseases. This is a provocative chapter stimulating many ideas for future research.

Most of the information presented here has been published previously, but the editor and the authors are to be congratulated on gathering it together so rapidly and presenting it in such an interesting and challenging form. This volume is to be recommended.

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