Book reviews

Rheumatoid Arthritis and Related Conditions. Vol. 2. (Ed.) G. S. Panayi. Pp 196. £11.50. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1978

This book is one of a series of annual research reviews which aim to provide an up-to-date source of research activity and a concise review of current thought in the fields they cover. It covers the literature quoted in *Index Medicus* from July 1976 to June 1977 inclusive. The publication date, in the second half of 1978, is perhaps a little later than is desirable if the series is to have maximum impact, but does mean that the book is more up to date than most.

Dr Panayi has been joined in the second edition by a number of colleagues who help him to avoid, in his own words, being 'drowned in a sea of reprints.' I counted 710 references, which means, after accounting for a certain amount of repetition and overlap, that 6 or 7 separate recent papers are being reviewed on every page. All this leads to difficult reading in some places, though many of the authors make a remarkably good job of turning their task into an easily digested account of current work. The chapter headings, about half on immunological and pathogenic aspects and half on clinical problems, reflect the amount of work going on in different areas. The more academic aspects are difficult for readers not engaged in active research but may help a clinician to understand what others are trying to do. The chapters on drug therapy, juvenile chronic arthritis, seronegative spondylarthritides and extra-articular manifestations will provide an up-to-date and comprehensive source of references on research work of more immediate relevance to practising clinicians.

The constraints set by a review of 1 year's work, with little space to expand on previous ideas, leaves the reader feeling himself to be immersed in an isolated pool of perhaps irrelevant data in places. The book is most successful when the authors express their own opinions and try to put the work in wider context. However, it is not meant to be read as a rheumatology text. What it does provide is a quick and easy means of access to current research for these actively involved in the field. As the series continues, and sequential editions appear on the bookshelf, its value will increase. I wish Dr Panayi success with future editions, and an even speedier publication deadline.

PAUL DIEPPE

Behcet's Disease. Excerpta Medica International Congress Series 467. Eds. N. Dilsen, M. Konice, and C. Ovül. Pp. 308. \$61.00. Excerpta Medica: Amsterdam. 1978.

This volume in the Excerpta Medica International Congress series is the Proceedings of an International Symposium on Behcet's Disease held in Istanbul in

September 1977, edited by the organisers. Fifty-seven separate articles are included, being the lectures and papers given during the symposium. The international nature of the symposium is revealed by the list of the 132 authors, the majority of whom were from Turkey or Japan, but with representation from Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Portugal, Tunisia, and the USA. The meeting was multidisciplinary, involving dermatologists, ophthalmologists, rheumatologists, oral pathologists, and immunologists.

Separate sessions on epidemiology, aetiology and pathology, clinical aspects, immunology, and treatment led to a comprehensive review of the current knowledge of this syndrome. The plethora of possible clinical manifestations are fully described, revealing again the apparent considerable variation in the incidence both of the syndrome itself and of its features in different parts of the world. The very large number of cases diagnosed in Japan and Turkey was again discussed. Gastrointestinal problems occur frequently in Japan but not in Turkey, the reverse being the case for pulmonary lesions. Familial incidence of the disease was reported from many centres. The evidence of immunological disturbances and a possible pathogenetic link with the possession of the HLA B5 antigen are described. Treatment with immunosuppressives, colchicine, and transfer factor were reported, with variable results, controlled trials not having been performed in either Japan or Turkey, where most cases are found.

The volume provides a good account of the state of knowledge of this unusual syndrome as presented in 1977, and certainly is a most useful reference work, especially since most of the contributors include a comprehensive bibliography.

COLIN G. BARNES

Immunodeficiency. World Health Organisation Technical Report Series No. 630. Pp. 80. Sw.fr. 7. WHO: Geneva. 1978.

This small booklet provides a rapid survey of immunodeficiency. However, it does not dispel the feeling of vagueness and of unsubstantiated statements which have confused this area for many years, and a more critical approach would have increased its value.

The booklet appears to be directed to practising clinicians, clinical pathologists, and research workers. Nevertheless, some important practical points are not made clearly or are incorrect. For instance, the important fact that patients with late-onset (common variable) hypogammaglobulinaemia usually respond well to 25–50 mg/kg per week of gammaglobulin, which should be continued for life, is not clearly stated. Moreover, the advice to treat with full doses of appropriate antibiotics after sensitivity testing of micro-organisms so as to select