Book reviews

Living with Arthritis and Rheumatism. Audio cassette by Peter Taylor. Living Tapes Ltd., 44 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 1DB. £4.75 (including postage and packing). 1980.

The audio cassette is nowadays very much part of our lives for music at home or on long car journeys, for dictation of correspondence or papers, and for educational purposes. Another feature of our present-day life as doctors is an increasing awareness of the need to educate our patients either by personal explanation or by books. In the field of rheumatic diseases we have handbooks for patients published by the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council as well as a number of other publications designed to inform the layman about his medical problem, a useful aim in these days of crowded clinics and surgeries, where adequate consultation time is all too limited.

The introduction of audio cassettes for patient education is therefore a natural development. This is one of 3 cassettes recently introduced by Living Tapes Ltd., the other 2 dealing with heart disease and giving up smoking. Future subjects to be covered will be diabetes, migraine, epilepsy, asthma, the old and bedridden, healthy eating, and alcohol.

'Hullo—this is Kenneth Kendall speaking!'—and so it is, the well-known reader of BBC television news bulletins lending his crisp friendly voice to give us half an hour on the rheumatic diseases with the same air of cheerful authority that he directs to news items on the Box every evening. Mr Peter Taylor is the actual writer of the piece.

After an introduction describing the meaning of words such as joints, rheumatism, and arthritis a number of individual rheumatic conditions are discussed: rheumatic fever (1 minute), osteoarthritis (6 minutes), rheumatoid arthritis (8 minutes), systemic lupus erythematosus (2 minutes), ankylosing spondylitis (1 minute), and gout (1 minute). A closing passage discussed the place of warmth, climate, physical aids, and organisations for the disabled. The writer bows to medical orthodoxy with repeated injunctions to trust the doctor: expensive remedies of unproved worth should be avoided.

The script is simple and clear and is free from serious error. It avoids being either too technical or condescending. Its treatment of the topics under discussion is necessarily superficial, and the only drugs mentioned by name are aspirin, antimalarials, gold ('a very ancient form of treatment') and steroids, although the multiplicity of pain-relieving drugs is implied.

Some statements ('overweight causes osteoarthritis'; 'rheumatoid arthritis is not caused by infection') are rather didactic, and one wonders what mental picture is produced by the term 'butterfly-shaped rash' without being told that it is situated on the face.

On the whole it is as well done as could reasonably be expected. The question at issue is whether the audio cassette is a more suitable medium of communication than books. The makers claim that 'this form of informa-

tion is much more easily assimilated than print,' but such affirmation may be doubted, except in the case of the blind or illiterate. Books are convenient and pleasant to handle; passages may be selected, read, and reread with ease; and above all simple visual illustrations and diagrams have great instructional value, particularly in the field of rheumatic diseases.

J. T. SCOTT

Arthritis and Rheumatism: The Facts. By J. T. Scott. Pp. 123. £4.50. Oxford University Press: London. 1980.

This book is one of a series written mainly for non-medical people to provide accurate information about various illnesses. The author has given the facts about the rheumatic diseases lucidly and truthfully. These facts are not very encouraging and no attempt is made to suggest that they are, but the reader should certainly gain understanding of his disease, which should make it easier for him to live with it, and certainly help the clinician treating him, who often has considerable difficulty in explaining the facts in a busy outpatients department. The book requires the reader to have reasonable intelligence to comprehend it fully and could with advantage be read as an introduction by nurses and medical students. The author does stress that it should not replace the usual textbooks for the latter, though I think that a good knowledge of this book would be more useful to medical students than the information on rheumatic diseases that most have when they qualify.

I was pleased to learn that the author has as much difficulty as I have when asked, 'Have I got rheumatism, doctor?' I believe that this well written book will be a great help to many patients and to those of us who try to treat them.

A. B. MYLES

The Joints and Synovial Fluid. Vol. 1. By Leon Sokoloff. Pp. 491. \$44.00. Academic Press: New York. 1978.

This first volume of a 2-volume treatise (the second will be available later this year) is a historic event. It updates our basic knowledge of the normal (and sometimes not so normal) joint from 1961, when Barnett, Davies, and McConnell published *Synovial Joints: Their Structure and Function*, to 1978—a period of unparalleled advance in new and sophisticated techniques in biochemistry, bioengineering, electron microscopy, immunology, and enzymology.

For scientists in this field this is an invaluable book both for reference (10 chapters, each with between 80 and 250 references) and for authoritative reviews. The authors are leaders in their own field, and the chapter headings include comparative arthrology (regrettably no mention of crustacea) embryology, fine structure, innervation, collagen, collagenases, cartilage biochemistry, macromolecules of synovial fluid, and lubrication, as well as an

excellent chapter on a rapidly advancing front, the immunology of joints, by Michael Elves.

The rare apparent omissions (on a quick reading and index consultation) may well be remedied in the second volume, for example, the angiogenesis inhibition factor of cartilage (first described in 1975) and amyloidosis in the aging joint capsule (described in 1976), both pertinent to this field.

For clinicians (rheumatologists and orthopaedic surgeons) the book offers a compendium of knowledge in the basic sciences of their arts, well presented for the most part, well referenced and well indexed, and with adequate illustrations. The editor, Leon Sokoloff from the National Institutes of Health and, more recently, the State University of New York at Stony Brook—perhaps the premier physiopathologist in this field—and his colleagues are to be congratulated on this difficult but most worthwhile achievement.

E. G. L. BYWATERS

Disorders of the Cervical Spine. By E. Jeffreys. Pp. 147. £25.00. Butterworths: Sevenoaks, Kent. 1980.

To produce a comprehensive monograph of disorders of the cervical spine is a formidable undertaking. This book comprises 10 chapters dealing with the applied anatomy, radiology, congenital malformations and deformities, fractures and dislocations, soft tissue injuries, osteomyelitis, the surgical management of skeletal tumours, other operations, cervical spondylosis, and the cervical spine involvement in rheumatic diseases.

In his preface Mr Jeffreys points out that he has been selective in his material and that specialists in other fields will be aware of deficiencies but that they may feel compensated by appreciating some of the orthopaedic problems of managing cervical injury and disease, and in this he has been successful. Rheumatologists may take issue with some of the statements in the latter 2 chapters but will undoubtedly find others, notably a contribution by Mr T. McSweeney on cervical injuries and their management, rewarding reading.

The book is profusely illustrated, but improvement in the quality of reproduction of some of the radiographs and correction of numerous proof-reading errors in the captions and text would enhance the attraction of any subsequent editions. The bibliography is selective but could with advantage be expanded, particularly as regards the pathological changes in rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis.

Mr Jeffreys states that he would like to think that orthopaedic residents in training would find the book most useful. I am sure that they will.

JAMES SHARP

Arthroscopy of the Knee Joint. By Hans Rudolph Henche. Pp. 85. DM 128.00. Springer-Verlag: Berlin. 1980.

This slim volume written by an experienced German orthopaedic surgeon provides a good account of the present state of knowledge of arthroscopy of the knee joint. It is written as a handbook intended for either surgeon or physician who wishes to take up arthroscopy as a routine procedure. The style is clear and concise, and

it details a number of the typical difficulties encountered by the inexperienced. The book's main attraction is the excellent quality of the many illustrations, which include a large number of colour plates of arthroscopic appearances, each with an accompanying anatomical diagram.

While the book is obviously intended primarily for orthopaedic surgeons, it is sufficiently broad in its context to make it a 'must' for any rheumatology unit where arthroscopic teaching and practice are performed.

BRIAN BOURKE

A Colour Atlas of Bone Disease. By Victor Parsons. Pp. 112. £14.00. Wolfe Medical Publications: London. 1980.

This elegant work represents a pictorial survey of bone disease and is divided into: introduction; presentation and history; examination of the patient; metabolic and endocrine bone disease; tumours of bone; bone involvement in systemic disease; and inflammatory disease of bone.

The material, a most palatable visual feast, comprises coloured photographs of clinical and pathological material, radiographs, bone scans, and diagrams. The last deserve particular mention. Many of these are based on full-skeleton outlines summarising the distribution of lesions in many of the bone diseases described. The combination of a clear black outline and the use of red to delineate the pathological areas is particularly effective. Throughout the book there is a harmonious balance between clinical relevance and graphic representation, and the contents fully justify the claim of its author that common disease processes are well represented and that the book is intended to illustrate mechanisms at the cellular level. The pictures have been chosen with considerable clinical feeling and have been presented with technical expertise and imagination.

The text is crisp and positive, and totally befits its role as a series of legends as opposed to running prose. The reference list is short but eclectic and gives full acknowledgment to the main world authorities in the field of bone disease.

The few minor criticisms certainly do not detract in any way from the enjoyment of this delightful book. The artistic skill resulting in Fig. 95, illustrating the fine structure of bone, is diminished by undue reduction; considering the central theme of the book this might have been allocated at least a half-page spread. Fig. 308, 'rheumatoid arthritis—invasion of bone by pannus', shows features more reminiscent of psoriatic arthritis, with prominent osteolytic 'whittling'. Fig. 312, showing a rheumatoid bursa on the elbow, is upside down (however, it may have been the intention to allow pictorial impact to override conventional orientation).

The book is highly recommended, not only to those involved directly with bone disease but also to those working in allied fields such as rheumatology and orthopaedics. Moreover, at the price listed even readers governed by the most conservative budget will be assured of excellent value, not only because this is an atlas in the truest sense, but also because of bonuses such as the fact