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Book review

Recent Advances in Rheumatology. No. 3. Eds. W. Carson Dick and J. M. H. Moll. Pp. 239. £24.00. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1983.

Dr W. Carson Dick and Dr J. M. H. Moll are to be congratulated on their editing of this volume. The contents reflect the broad interdisciplinary approach on which understanding of the rheumatic diseases has progressed through the last decade.

Although the speculative gap between animal diseases associated with arthritis and various rheumatic diseases seems not to have narrowed, a reading of the first chapter (D. Bennett and F. Goodacre) will rekindle interest in tantalising analogies. Similarly, the account of the pattern of parasitic and infectious disease associated with arthritis in the African continent (S. Brighton) and the relatively low prevalence of rheumatoid arthritis provides perspective in any consideration of temperate zone problems. The account of studies exploiting monoclonal antibodies (A. R. MacKenzie and A. R. Williamson) and an updated summary of the relevance the major histocompatibility system has to rheumatic disorders (K. Welsh and C. M. Black) are valuable. Further advances in the understanding of rheumatoid

arthritis in particular are likely to result from a synthesis of these approaches. Chapters describing the molecular structure of the connective tissues (J. P. Pearson) and rheumatoid pathology (B. Vernon-Roberts) are both well written and useful summaries.

Finally there are four chapters of direct clinical interest. A refreshing account of the myopathies (P. Hodgson), orthopaedic management (G. Bentley and G. S. E. Dowd), and the uncertainties of 'immune manipulation' (R. S. Amos and D. J. Walker) are summaries of current practices. The final chapter (V. Wright) will be a useful reference to the available methods of assessment in rheumatology, but the problem of devising an accurate, reproducible and time efficient means of assessing the arthritic patient under clinic conditions is obviously no closer to solution.

This book, although selective in scope, will be particularly helpful to those training in the specialty. Despite the editors' preface relating to the arbitrary choice of what is to be regarded as either recent or an advance, the potential reader would be better guided to the scope of this text had the review format of the contributions been reflected in the title.

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