

Book reviews

Pathology of Bone. By P A Revell. Pp. 293. £47.00. Springer: London. 1986.

This pleasant, friendly, well written book gives very adequate coverage of most aspects of the pathology of bone. The selection of topics and detail has been effectively calculated to render the book useful in diagnostic work, and as a book to study. The balance favours the latter in that the author provides the groundwork that enables a diagnosis to be arrived at rather than patterns for matching. This form of approach works particularly well in bone, especially in metabolic disorders, where lies the centre of gravity of this book. Bone responds to many stimuli, local and general; to understand this thoroughly is to grasp the essentials of bone pathology. The pathological processes, as known from general pathology, all occur in bones, modified by their architecture, the tissue structure, and the bone cell responses under the control of local and general mechanisms. The various pathological processes are treated in turn, building up a picture of the subject. The section devoted to congenital and developmental disorders, a large topic not possible to deal with comprehensively in a book of this order, is well treated and referenced. The most lightly treated subject is neoplasia, a topic fully covered by several authoritative texts. Here the first steps in sorting tissue patterns are set out.

This book has a commodious page size, a slim profile, a firm binding, and a pleasant handle. The illustrations are large and clear and make their point. There is a strikingly large number of references, of great value to further reading; and there is a very adequate index.

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Atlas of Skeletal Dysplasias. By R Wynne-Davies, C M Hall, A Graham Apley. Pp 637. £90.00 approx. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1985.

This is an authoritative and clearly presented text on all the rare but important skeletal disorders. The emphasis is on the paediatric features of these conditions, but this comprehensive review follows their progress into adult life. This is why it will prove so useful as a reference volume for rheumatologists, who will all face the occasional patient presenting in adult life with often a relatively mild form of one such dysplasia where diagnosis may be difficult.

There is a short opening paragraph outlining use of the atlas as an aid to diagnosis, so that the reader can refer to the appropriate section to establish the major group to which the patient belongs, for example spondyloepiphyseal or epiphyseal alone. A clear index adds a further reference point by including only physical signs, such as cleft palate

or platybasia, which are useful in differential diagnosis. It is this clear presentation of the key features of conditions, well illustrated with the progressive radiological features and clinical appearances, which provides such easy cross reference.

There is also a useful chapter on normal radiological findings from the first to the 14th year of life for those more interested in the paediatric features. The main value for the rheumatologist, however, is the description of clinical and radiological features in adult life. It is difficult to find fault in such a comprehensive book, though for the non-specialist there could perhaps have been even more details on the adult course, for example the spinal features of hypophosphataemic rickets.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that this excellent book should be available in postgraduate libraries as a reference text to establish the diagnosis in the occasional problem patient; for anyone with a more specialised interest in the subject this would seem well worth purchasing for personal use.

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Advances in Inflammation Research. Vol. 10. Eds. F Russo-Marie, J M Mencia-Huerta, M Chignard. Pp. 461. US\$60.50. Raven Press: New York. 1985.

This volume provides a broad spectrum of current approaches in the field of inflammation research. The contents are arranged so as to give an overview of the importance of the cell membrane in inflammation, especially the metabolism of its lipid components and its activation by various messengers and signals. Membrane damage by complement and the role of growth factors and cell proliferation in experimental atherosclerosis are well covered, and the section on current concepts on the action of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs also proved of interest. These opening chapters were generally short, didactic, and contained a wealth of information. As such they made for easy reading, provided a useful update, and were well supported by detailed reference. The remainder of the book is dedicated to short communications on many aspects of inflammation. They include reports on both lipid and protein derived mediators of inflammation, with useful sections on free radicals, tissue degrading enzymes, and mast cells. The short communications are grouped under subject headings, which would prove most convenient for the specialist researcher. The novel sections on pain, lipoxins, and the update on experimental models of inflammation also made interesting reading. Of the numerous short communications, those presented as short reviews proved more useful than the detailed experimental submissions.

This volume serves to demonstrate the complexity of the 'inflammatory response' exceptionally well. The editors