Book reviews


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.

Institute of Orthopaedics, Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore.

PAUL D BYERS


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.

The London Hospital

J D PERRY


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
suggest that a basic concept is developing which relates to an initial stimulus-response coupling in inflammatory cells, subsequently amplified by the formation and release of various mediators. A brief assessment of all the topics included in this book, however, leaves the reader wondering what the hierarchy and relative importance of the various inflammatory mediators might be, and an extended editorial pointing the way to the future would have been most useful. As it is the editors have put together a good book which provides an update on a broad range of recent trends in inflammation, one that makes easy reading for both the neophyte and established researcher.

University Hospital of South Manchester, Manchester M20 8LR


To paraphrase an old saying of Isaac Asimov, the sound of heavy breathing in the corridors of research institutions should not cause alarm, it is merely the brothers and sisters attempting to keep up with the literature. For those researching in the field, this book Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Drugs will bring some relief to the respiratory system.

The volume is more than just a turgid litany of the chemistry and the biology of these compounds. Rather, it consists of four sections dealing with the changes in cartilage in osteoarthritis, the mediators and the mechanisms of inflammation, laboratory methods for testing nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and finally, the medicinal chemistry of NSAIDs.

Together, these four sections form a comprehensive overview and reference to the science of NSAIDs, without entering the field of clinical trials. Perhaps the opening section on articular cartilage, while being quite excellent, appears a little out of context.

The complex subject of mediators and mechanisms of inflammation is well described by Dawson and Willoughby, with the interaction of chemical, cellular, and immunological mechanisms well explained and illustrated.

A large and comprehensive section by Otterness and Bliven describes both the testing of NSAIDs for efficacy, and side effects. The number of models of acute and chronic inflammation described is impressive. The accurate description of particular techniques will be useful for both the beginner in this field and also for older hands who wish to expand their repertoire. Clinicians will find the section useful for assessing the relative merits of data from animal experiments when extrapolation to clinical pharmacology is required.

A section on the medicinal chemistry of the NSAIDs covers the subject in sufficient depth to be useful to chemists and biologists alike. Both familiar and little known NSAIDs are covered in a logical fashion, emphasis being placed on the derivation of each substance from its parent compound, and comparisons are made of the anti-inflammatory and analgesic efficacy of comparative structures. This section, like the others, is distinguished by the comprehensive list of references in the text.

The shock of the cost of scientific textbooks never ceases to cause pain; this volume produced the usual reaction. For serious students of the subject, however, the comprehensive and generously referenced text is probably a worthwhile purchase; followed swiftly by 600 mg of soluble aspirin (not on an empty stomach).

Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology, University of Bath and Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath

Notes

XIth European Rheumatology Congress

The congress will be held in Athens, Greece from 28 June to 4 July 1987. Main topics will be adult inflammatory joint diseases; autoimmune connective tissue diseases; juvenile rheumatism; degenerative joint diseases; crystal induced arthropathies; metabolic bone diseases; soft tissue rheumatism and mechanical spine disorders; miscellaneous bone disorders and malignant tumours; orthopaedic intervention; rehabilitation and physical therapy in the rheumatic diseases; and medical-social aspects. Details of the scientific programme from Professor H H Moutsopoulos, University of Ioannina Medical School, Ioannina, Greece.

General information from Horizon, 14 Nikis Street, GR-105 57 Athens, Greece.

Symposium on hand and upper extremity implant surgery

The 17th annual international symposium on implant surgery for the hand and upper extremity will be held at Blodgett Memorial Medical Center and Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA on 11–13 September 1986. Inquiries to Dr Alfred B Swanson, Blodgett Professional Building, 1900 Wealthy Street, S E, Suite 290, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506, USA.