devoted to the surgery of arthritis, and one of the greatest advances in the management of rheumatic diseases in the last quarter of a century has been the evolution of a close working relationship between orthopaedic surgeons and rheumatologists and their acknowledged interdependence in the cooperative management of potentially long term disabling conditions, particularly rheumatoid disease, from the earliest stages. Surely the field of locomotor disorders has become too vast to be encompassed satisfactorily by a single author, and as it stands this textbook cannot be unreservedly recommended for use by anyone who has not already received significant exposure to the medical aspects of the locomotor diseases. It is to be hoped that in preparing the next edition the author will co-opt an experienced rheumatologist to assist him with the relevant parts of the text, thus converting an excellent book with a number of niggling and avoidable errors into an impeccable primary reference volume.

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D R L NEWTON

Dupuytren's Disease. 2nd Edn. Eds. J T Hueston and R Tubiana. Pp. 210. £35.00. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1986.

Dupuytren's disease is a major cause of mainly manual disability in peoples of European stock and particularly those with blue eyes. Thus it is interesting that recent studies in Japan have shown the disease to be common there in older age groups, though the proportion of male to female patients is greater there than in Europe.

As it is generally considered that medical treatment is largely ineffective the tendency is to think only of surgical intervention (or regard the condition as untreatable; patients are quite often still so advised despite excellent results when treatment is carried out by competent hand surgeons, with the proviso that recurrence may occur).

This monograph considers the subject in wide detail, the text being divided into three sections—anatomy, aetiology and pathology, and the problems of surgery—each roughly a third of the book. Thirty three contributors present a very broad approach to the study of the condition.

Although this book is obviously of prime importance to hand surgeons treating the condition from an essentially mechanical point of view, considerable advances made in knowledge of the disease process are evident since the first edition some 10 years ago. Owing to this greater understanding, interesting linkages with other conditions have been made which may eventually offer more medical approaches to treatment in the future. The controversial use of vitamin E, often dismissed but seemingly useful in some cases, is not considered, nor are the biochemical blood changes, but the excellence of the study should make fascinating reading for all involved in the broad field of rheumatology. I hope that the book will find a place in the

libraries of most rheumatology departments. Perhaps this would stimulate a wider approach to the study of a fascinating and often physically disabling disease entity.

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K M BACKHOUSE

Soft Tissue Rheumatic Pain: Recognition, Management, Prevention. 2nd Edn. By R P Sheon, R A Moskowitz, V M Golding. Pp. 332. US\$ 46.75. Lea and Febiger: Philadelphia. 1987.

Some rheumatologists, finding no interest in soft tissue disorders, content themselves with expensive investigations in order to exclude systemic disease, and, similarly, some orthopaedic surgeons finding nothing to operate on, leave it at that and send the patient to a physiotherapist. They would do well to read this valuable book and to experience the satisfaction of making a clinical diagnosis.

In my young days the *Textbook of Orthopaedic Medicine: Vol I: Diagnosis of Soft Tissue Lesions* by Cyriax was a 'must' and, indeed, still is. The years go by, however, and the book under review is more up to date, describing diagnostic and treatment techniques and with an excellent list of references.

Disorders are dealt with regionally. Emphasis is put on the important points in the history and the particular signs to be elicited. I especially liked the lists of 'danger signals' to alert the clinician to serious conditions, such as infection and neoplasia, and the lists of dos and don'ts for joint protection.

I did not agree with everything in the chapter on low back pain and thought it a pity that no mention was made of Wadell's inappropriate signs. It is also a pity that the excellent introductory chapter, 'An overview of diagnosis and management', should have the section on the impact of musculoskeletal pain on society physically interrupted by 12 pages of anatomical diagrams.

I strongly recommend this beautifully presented and illustrated book to every rheumatology department. For me, it does not completely replace Cyriax but will sit beside it on the shelf.

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MARY CORBETT

Anti-Inflammatory Compounds. Clinical Pharmacology Series. Vol. 9. Edited by W R Nigel Williamson. Pp. 504. US\$ 107.50. Marcel Dekker: New York. 1987.

This is the ninth volume in an occasional series of reviews on topics of current interest in clinical pharmacology. It draws on authors from industry and academia.

A brief chapter reviewing rheumatic disorders will seem idiosyncratic to clinicians, though the next chapter by Dudley Hart, reviewing the range of antirheumatic drugs

is much more comprehensive. There follow brief reviews of events in inflammation and the likely mechanism of action of anti-inflammatory compounds together with a description of their biochemical effects and of standard assays for anti-inflammatory activity. Almost one third of the book is then devoted to a detailed description not only of the structure of each of the standard anti-inflammatory agents but also of the chemical processes by which they are synthesised. A brief chapter reviews recent trends in formulation, including carrier systems, the osmotic pump, and transdermal drug delivery. The final chapters deal with the metabolism of anti-inflammatory agents and the side effects that result from their use.

The reviews are comprehensive and well referenced up to the end of 1984. The book is felt by the editor to provide a useful introduction to the subject, though it is likely to be more widely read by industrial scientists, particularly chemists, than by clinicians.

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H A BIRD

Computers in Rheumatology. ARC Conference Proceedings. No 1. Pp. 111. £5.00. Arthritis and Rheumatism Council: London. 1987.

This is a report of a two day 'state of the art' conference held at The London Hospital in June 1986 and is the first in a series of forthcoming 'ARC reports'. The early part of the proceedings consist largely of individual reports on the computerisation of clinical projects of varying complexity. Many of the systems were later on display and, under-

standably, the reports do not fully reflect the vitality of the first day. One message comes across loud and clear, however; computerisation does not save time and effort, but its successful rise is rewarded by increased accuracy and efficiency.

The last, and more readily digestible, part is devoted to reports of the chairmen of workshops charged with investigating the potential of computers in certain aspects of rheumatology, such as a diagnostic index, medical audit, research, and medical records, including word processing. The workshops draw upon the expertise of systems designers, statisticians, and epidemiologists and produce useful guidelines. The need for clear objectives is stressed, the problems of software unsuitability and incompatibility discussed and contrasted with the relatively less severe difficulties of hardware choice, and potential sources of help and advice indicated. Reading this section it becomes clear how closely the various applications inter-relate. A diagnostic index, for example, can generate material for clinical management, for audit, and for research. In the field of audit alone the first skirmishes have taken place, and the prospect of a computer war between the district mainframe and the departmental micro is chilling, to say the least.

The proceedings are well summarised and, in a bewildering and rapidly changing field, point the way to future developments. The involvement of the BSR, through its computer subcommittee, is encouraging.

(This review written on 'Easyscript' in a Commodore 64 linked to an Epson RX 80 printer in 'enhanced mode' via a Micro Peripherals tripler—all expletives deleted.)

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R A STURGE

Notes

Hellenic Society for Rheumatology

The XIth Panhellenic Congress of Rheumatology with International Participation will take place in Athens on 1–3 December 1988. The topics will be 'Autoantibodies in rheumatic diseases' and 'Immunomodulation in the treatment of rheumatic diseases'. Further information from Dr D Karras, 50 Kallidromiou Street, 114 73 Athens, Greece.

IVth Mediterranean congress of rheumatology

The congress will be held in Istanbul, Turkey on 2–3 June 1988. Topics will include juvenile chronic arthritis, familial Mediterranean fever, and amyloidosis associated with rheumatic diseases. Details from Professor Nihat Dilsen, President of the Congress, VIP Tourism Pirinccioglu Inc, Cumhuriyet Cad 269/2 Harbiye, Istanbul, Turkey.

XVII Congress of the Spanish Society of Rheumatology

This Congress will be held in Barcelona from 18 to 21 May 1988. Further information from Dr P. Barceló, Garcia, Hospital Malalties Reumàtiques, Passeig de Josep Carner, 31, 08004 Barcelona.

Back pain: current concepts and recent advances

The 2nd European Congress on this topic will be held in Montreux, Switzerland on 4–6 May 1988. Further information from the Congress Secretariat, 30 Deane Way, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 8SX, England.

1st Mediterranean symposium on Behçet's disease

This symposium will be held in Istanbul, Turkey on 4 June 1988. Details from Professor Nihat Dilsen, President of the Congress, VIP Tourism Pirinccioglu Inc, Cumhuriyet Cad 269/2 Harbiye, Istanbul, Turkey.