

Book reviews

Clinical Rheumatology Illustrated. Edited by F D Hart. Pp 409. £68.00. Williams and Wilkins: London. 1987. ISBN 0-86433-003-0.

This book is not user friendly. It is a curate's egg scrambled—good in parts (indeed excellent in a few sections, mainly those written by the editor), but a thorough muddle in the order of the chapters, in the order within the chapters, in the emphasis placed on certain aspects (why a whole chapter on gonococcal infection?), and in the mix of mundane but important with technical but useless.

If you are a generalist looking for a book to assist with the diagnosis of a patient it won't help; if you are a specialist seeking background information on a disease you have already diagnosed there are numerous better texts, better referenced too. Not even Frank Dudley Hart's masterpiece 'Radiograph of OA with guinea worm' can make amends.

My overwhelming desire was to attack the book with a pair of scissors so I could reconstruct it, but at £68 it is by no means a snip—pardon the pun. I would advise a prospective purchaser—don't.

Consultant Rheumatologist,
Queen Mary's Hospital,
Sidcup,
Kent DA14 6LT

ANDREW BAMJI

System Sclerosis: Scleroderma. Eds. M I V Jayson and C M Black. Pp. 350. £75.00. John Wiley: Chichester. 1988. ISBN 0-471-90846-0.

Hitherto the subject of systemic sclerosis: scleroderma has been dealt with at most as a chapter and that too only in the major medical and rheumatological texts. Recent advances in immunology and genetics, the proliferation of research, experience and interest in the wide spectrum of conditions included under the term scleroderma and systemic sclerosis demand a more realistic coverage.

Clinicians and researchers often have the laborious task

of wading through numerous volumes of *Index Medicus* or major works in different disciplines to obtain the information they require. This excellent volume by a distinguished international group of contributors, which deals authoritatively and comprehensively with all aspects of systemic sclerosis: scleroderma, meets a demand and eliminates the chores.

The first chapter deals with classification, the limitations of the present diagnostic criteria, difficulties in early diagnosis, and the wide spectrum of disease. The last chapter on overlap syndromes amplifies and reinforces these themes. Chapters on the clinical epidemiological perspective, environmental and genetic factors, and experimental models collate a whole range of information not generally available in the standard texts. The basic disciplines of cellular and humoral immunity and the role of connective tissue and vascular factors are all clearly and expertly treated, leading the reader on to very detailed chapters on clinical aspects, including childhood and localised scleroderma, assessment, and treatment. Each chapter has its own comprehensive and up to date list of references.

The role of endothelial cell injury and connective tissue abnormality in the pathogenesis is discussed at length, but I found no mention of factors such as immune mediated vasculopathy. As is inevitable in a multiauthor volume there is some degree of repetition, particularly in the clinical manifestations and immunology, and variations in style are noted in the individual introductions and history, which interfere with the smooth flow of the text from chapter to chapter.

These are minor 'deficiencies' in an excellent volume which is certain to become the standard and most convenient reference book on the subject. Most of its contents, particularly the clinical sections, are unlikely to change much, guaranteeing this edition a long 'shelf life' and justifying its price of £75. Not only will it find its place in the institutional and departmental library but would also be the ideal present for the rheumatologist who has everything!

Department of Rheumatology,
Prince Charles Hospital,
Merthyr Tydfil,
South Wales

MALCOLM DE SILVA