Book reviews

Calcium Homeostasis: Hypercalcaemia and Hypocalcaemia. Gregory R Mundy. (Pp 248; £49.95.) 154 Camden High Street, London: Martin Dunitz, 1989. ISBN 0-948269-67-7.

A detailed and comprehensive account of the pathophysiology, differential diagnosis, and management of hypercalcaemic and hypocalcaemic states is provided by this book. Although the book is clinically based, there is a strong emphasis on the basic aspects of bone cell activity and calcium homeostasis also.

It is easy to read, extensively referenced, and illustrated by several line drawings and figures which emphasise relevant points in the text. Particular highlights include the section on hypercalcaemia associated with cancer and the hormonal factors which influence calcium homeostasis; the latter includes a detailed account of the effects of cytokines and growth factors on bone cell activity—an area of increasing research interest but one which is poorly covered by other currently available textbooks. The only section which I found slightly disappointing was that on the medical management of hypercalcaemia; in particular, details of the use of 'second generation' bisphosphonates, such as clodronate and pamidronate, are rather sketchy, though this possibly reflects the fact that neither of these agents is licensed for use in the United States, where the author practises. A slightly irritating feature was the format of the references, which are grouped together at the end of the book by chapter number. When I was reading the book I found myself turning to the end to check a reference, only to have to turn back to my original place in the text to remind myself of which chapter I was reading! In subsequent editions it would make things easier for the reader if the references were either situated at the end of each chapter or all grouped together in one section at the end of the book.

These are minor criticisms, however, and overall, I felt that this was an excellent book. Although the subject matter is fairly specialised, it would be a valuable and reasonably priced reference text for rheumatologists, endocrinologists, and oncologists who often have to deal with patients with hypocalcaemia and hypercalcaemia and would like an up-to-date and authoritative account of the pathogenesis and management of these disorders.

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Orthopaedic Radiology: Pattern Recognition and Differential Diagnosis. Peter Renton. (Pp 384; £49.95.) 154 Camden High Street, London: Martin Dunitz, 1990. ISBN 0-948269-58-8.

Aimed mainly at trainees in radiology and orthopaedic surgery, this book, as the author says in his preface, follows the 'pattern recognition' approach popularised by the late Dr George Simon in his book *Principles of Bone X-Ray Diagnosis*. It takes the plain radiograph as its starting point and divides abnormalities accordingly—localised lesions, increase and decrease in bone density, lesions affecting the epiphysis, metaphysis, and diaphysis, periosteal reactions, and so on.

In each section the abnormalities commonly encountered in clinical practice are dealt with and, where appropriate, some rarer examples. Isotopes and computed tomographic scans are used as supplements, but magnetic resonance imaging is not covered. It is more of an atlas than a textbook, and as such largely stands or falls on the quality of its radiographic reproductions. These are the work of the medical photographic department of the Institute of Orthopaedics, and, as is to be expected, are excellent. Lesions are shown to the best advantage, and are clearly linked to the accompanying text. The text itself is succinct and gives a fair summary of the features of individual lesions, with references for further reading.

Where does all this leave the busy rheumatologist? For the training grades, and indeed for some established rheumatologists, this book will give a good overall picture of bone radiology. The arthritides are also covered, but anyone seeking the subtlety and diversity of joint radiology must consult one of the established texts—Resnick and Niwayama, Martell, Forester and Brown, etc, or turn to the latest journals. The book is reasonably priced and can be fully recommended for all rheumatology libraries.

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