

Book reviews

Immunointervention in Autoimmune Diseases. Ed J F Bach. (Pp 224; £20.) London: Academic Press, 1989. ISBN 0-12-069860-9.

If you missed the meeting and if you missed the *Journal of Autoimmunity* volume 1, number 6—do not fear! You can still buy edited highlights of a meeting held in Paris in June 1988 dedicated to immunointervention in autoimmunity. The meeting was by all accounts a well organised, stimulating event. Judged by some of the papers presented in this soft-back book (identical to the aforementioned *Journal of Autoimmunity* volume), however, the notion of immunointervention was stretched rather thin. This caveat aside the volume is an interesting mix of short reviews, conceptual articles and recent work. Thus Talal's views about the maintenance of autoimmunity, Fry's overview of immunointervention in skin disease, and the thoughts of Steinberg and colleagues about immunosuppression of autoimmunity, in general, provide useful overviews. Penn emphasises the present 'blunderbuss attack on the immune system' by conventional immunosuppressive treatment. While more specific therapeutic modalities are sought, doctors must remain vigilant about the dangers of neoplasia caused both by conventional immunosuppressive drugs—for example, azathioprine, cyclophosphamide, as well as newer drugs like cyclosporin. The more beneficial aspects of cyclosporin treatment, notably in juvenile onset diabetes, are well covered in this volume. Idiotypic considerations in lupus are aired in a thoughtful paper by Bevra Hahn. A potentially fascinating model of lupus, by immunising healthy mice with human monoclonal antibodies bearing the public idiotype 16/6 is described by Blank *et al.* It requires independent confirmation, however.

Like many such volumes, this one represents a pleasant dip into the waters of autoimmunity. It is far from comprehensive, however, and at £20 is a little over priced.

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The Antiquity of the Erosive Arthropathies. ARC conference proceeding No 5. Peter J Maddison. (Pp 86; £5, postage £1.) London: Arthritis and Rheumatism Council, 1989.

The proceedings of a one day meeting organised by the Bristol University rheumatology unit are described in this volume. The antiquity of rheumatic arthritis and the related erosive arthropathies are worthy of discussion not only as an academic pursuit but also as a scientific tool to provide new clues to aetiopathogenetic factors. One of the aims of the meeting was to bring together experts on skeletal paleopathology and experts on rheumatology so that information and ideas could be exchanged. The contributions to this meeting, overviews, paleopathological case representations, and discussions are brought together in this volume. Skeletal paleopathology is discussed in the context of medical history and modern epidemiological expectations. This volume provides some insights and help for those working in this fringe area of rheumatology. For others not directly involved in this field it makes interesting reading.

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J DEQUEKER

Surgical Management of Rheumatoid Arthritis. Ed F H Beddow. (Pp 194; £55.) Guildford, Surrey: Butterworth, 1989. ISBN 0-7236-1007-X.

A product of Howard Beddow's 25 years' experience in a combined orthopaedic rheumatology clinic, this book is for surgeons.

Sections on medical rheumatology, paediatrics, pathology,

and anaesthesia precede the bulk of the text, which is devoted to surgery. The chapters by Dr Roger Bucknall are particularly crisp, concise, and stimulating, and if the sections on pathology and anaesthesia involve some repetition, they are highly practical and emphasise the limitations of the techniques used.

Howard Beddow covers the shoulder, hip, knee, and foot himself and recruits contributors of genuine expertise to cover the hand, elbow, and spine. The format of the surgical chapters is uniform, the contents factual, and operative descriptions carry sufficient detail for a surgeon to undertake the procedures proposed.

Orthopaedic surgery grew from its origins in Liverpool and the city has run the finest postgraduate training programme in the world for over 60 years. This excellent book is worthy of the Liverpool tradition, it merits a place in every orthopaedic library, and is required reading for any orthopaedic surgeon treating patients with rheumatological diseases.

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Autoantibodies to Immunoglobulins. Ed F Shakib. (Pp 274; £100.) Basel: Karger, 1989. ISBN 3-8055-4913-X.

This volume represents a collection of monographs covering a variety of aspects of antibodies to immunoglobulins, with an emphasis on antibodies to IgE and their potential pathogenic role, and conventional rheumatoid factors. The book is divided into four sections. The first, dealing with methods of detection, contains two chapters devoted to assays for anti-immunoglobulins and one examining in detail the ways in which rheumatoid factors can interfere with immunoassays. The second section, termed biological interactions, deals with idiotypes and specificity of rheumatoid factors and their interactions with complement and cells of the immune system. The third and fourth sections, dealing with role in disease and experimental animals respectively, attempt to examine the pathogenic role of antiglobulins.

The book contains excellent reviews and some novel experimental data. On the other hand, it also suffers more than usually from the defects of a multi-author volume. The main criticism is that it lacks a single coordinating theme. In the Preface the editor states that the publication was inspired by the concept that anti-IgE autoantibodies might contribute to allergic reactions by cross linking IgE immunoglobulins bound to mast cells, though nowhere is the experimental evidence for this intriguing hypothesis critically examined. Even the broader subject and still controversial issue of anti-IgE autoantibodies only occupies a quarter of the volume, while the rest of the text is devoted to heterogeneous and in some cases rather uninspired papers on aspects of conventional rheumatoid factors.

The contributions lack balance. Some of the chapters—for example, that by Jeffries and Mageed—represent wide ranging reviews and others simply regurgitate in unnecessary detail data already published. In the field of rheumatoid factors there are notable omissions about important recent developments. There is very little on V gene usage and no mention of natural antibodies nor of their controversial relation with CD5 positive B cells. In the chapters covering autoantibodies to IgE—a much smaller subject—coverage is more complete, but there is considerable duplication.

At £100, one would not recommend this book for a rheumatologist or a library devoted to rheumatic disease. It would be worth considering for those interested in the possible contribution of anti-IgE autoantibodies to allergy, though such potential purchasers would also be paying for reviews on aspects of conventional rheumatoid factors, most of which are unrelated to hypersensitivity reactions.

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