Notes and news

Heberden papers

We will be continuing our series of supplements during the year, taking one subject at a time. The aim is to portray the present status of that subject in much more detail by means of a series of commissioned papers. This enables acknowledged experts in the field to state their views on the present state of knowledge in that particular field. We will be producing two such supplements during the course of the year. If you do not agree with the views stated—necessarily didactic—write and tell us.

Spinal disorders: a holistic approach

A conference on 'Spinal disorders: a holistic approach' will be held under the auspices of the Austrian Society of Physicians specialising in manual medicine in the new lecture centre of Vienna's General Hospital, from 27 to 29 September 1991. For further information please contact: The Congress Secretariat, österreichisches Forschungsinstitut, Kongressbüro, Objekt 213, Franz Grill-Strasse 5, A-1030 Vienna, Austria. Tel: (0222) 78 16 01. Fax: (0222) 78 16 01 18.

Hypertrophic osteoarthropathy

The first international workshop on 'Hypertrophic osteoarthropathy' will be held in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, from 9 to 11 September 1991.

For further details please contact: Secretariat of International Workshop on Hypertrophic Osteoarthropathy, Professor Ivo Jajic, Department of Physical Medicine and Rheumatology, Lovcenska 100, 41000 Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

Back pain

The American Back Society will be holding a spring symposium on back pain from 1 to 5 May 1991, at the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 18½ hours CME category 1 credit.

The course chairmen will be Rene Cailliet, MD and John P Kostuik, MD FRCS(C).

For further details please contact: Aubrey A Swartz, MD, Executive Director, American Back Society, 2647 East 14th Street, Suite 401, Oakland, Ca 94601, USA. Tel (415) 536 9929. Fax (415) 536 1812.

Book review

A Textbook and Colour Atlas of the Temporomandibular Joint—Diseases; Disorders; Surgery. Eds J E deB Norman, P Bramley. (Pp 262; £95.) London: Wolfe, 1990. ISBN 0-7234-1518-8.

Diagnosis and treatment of disorders affecting the temporomandibular joint is a daunting prospect for the beginner and a considerable challenge even for the experienced. Most disorders require conservative treatment, which depends on a thorough understanding of the function of the joint and the occlusion of the teeth. For a few conditions, and when conservative treatment fails, surgery may be the treatment of choice. This book is for the surgeon.

It is composed of 13 chapters contributed by 12 authors, each of whom has special expertise in various aspects of diagnosis or surgery. Thus each chapter draws extensively from the contributor's personal experience, and many original data are given. The book is essentially a working manual for the surgeon, and most chapters give detailed step by step instructions on how to perform various diagnostic and surgical techniques. The chapters on surgical access and applied anatomy and on arthroscopy and arthroscopic surgery are particularly lucid in this respect and guide the reader carefully through difficult procedures using clearly written text and good illustrations. The chapters on temporomandibular joint anatomy and on growth problems are also worthy of note.

Chapter 1 presents the anatomy of the joint in a series of sagittal and coronal serial sections. The specimens are beautifully prepared and photographed and by careful study one can gain a clear understanding of the structure and relations of the joint. Unfortunately, the instructions and diagrams on how to use the photographs are not clear, and even for a pathologist familiar with serial sections it can be difficult to follow the sequence. Despite this, I would urge the reader to persevere and study the material carefully for this is a unique resource.

The chapter by David James presents his experience, gained at Great Ormond Street, of craniofacial growth disturbance that affects the joint. It is clear, concise, illustrated with excellent clinical photographs, and gives straightforward advice on

treatment. It is the only chapter which emphasises the importance of the dental occlusion in management—an issue sadly neglected in other chapters.

There are few indications for histopathological examination of the joint and therefore experience in this area can be difficult to acquire. The chapter on pathology considers this problem by presenting the pathology of the common disorders, including osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. This chapter also presents the pathology of a number of rare or unusual lesions, the clinical features of which are presented in the chapter on unusual surgical diseases and disorders. These two chapters are badly cross referenced and as they refer to particular cases it might have been better to have presented the clinical features alongside the pathology.

The chapter on medical diseases considers rheumatological conditions that affect the joint and the chapter on imaging gives an up-to-date review of radiography, arthrography, computed tomography, and magnetic resonance imaging. There are also chapters on post traumatic disorders, dislocation, ankylosis, and surgery for internal derangement.

Although designated as a 'textbook and colour atlas', the book is really a lavishly illustrated textbook. Only chapter 1 would be recognised by most as being in an atlas format, and some chapters have no photographs at all. It is rarely possible to use the illustrations without careful reading of the text so the casual browser may be deterred. A serious dip into the text will reap enormous benefits, however, because the book is thoughtfully and clearly written and is very instructive. The photographs and illustrations, with a few exceptions, are of high quality and the whole book is well referenced.

There is something in this book for everyone with an interest in the temporomandibular joint and it deserves a place in every library. As a surgical manual it is good value at £95 and must be essential reading for all surgical trainees who may be required to diagnose or operate in this area.

Dental Institute,
London Hospital Medical College,
London E1 2AD

P M SPEIGHT