Notes and news

Congress of the African League Against Rheumatism

Because of the Gulf crisis the 1st congress of the African League Against Rheumatism has been rescheduled for the 23–27 September 1991.

The attention of all those proposing to attend this course is drawn to this notice.

Applied epidemiology

There will be an intensive course on applied epidemiology from 4 to 8 November 1991, organised by the ARC Epidemiology Research Unit in Manchester, United Kingdom. The course is residential and limited to 20 places. The course will be on the application of epidemiology relevant to rheumatology but no prior experience in epidemiology is required.

For further details and application forms please contact: Margaret Fullalove, ARC Epidemiology Research Unit, Stopford Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PT. Tel: 061 275 5040. Fax: 061 275 5043.

Thanks

Paul and Elizabeth Dieppe would like to thank all their friends for their good wishes, help, and support during the last six months.

Book reviews


Norman Talal and colleagues arranged the 2nd international symposium on Sjögren’s syndrome in Austin, Texas in October 1988. Some 80 invited participants were present, and this volume consists of a series of papers which were presented at the meeting. It includes some of the clinical problems accompanying Sjögren’s syndrome, ranging from its recent associations with HIV infection to the molecular structure of the La and Ro autoantigens. Of necessity this volume is not a comprehensive guide to Sjögren’s syndrome, it is also already a little out of date (for example it has now been established that the Ro antigen has at least four antigenic constituents), nevertheless, it represents a most useful overview of current research in a wide range of fields related to Sjögren’s syndrome.

I was particularly glad to see the inclusion of the paper by Andonopoulos stressing the rare association of major central nervous system disease in Sjögren’s syndrome. This observation has now been confirmed by three different groups and has helped to put the original reports of Alexander and colleagues in perspective.

Although there is an understandable bias towards the molecular biology of the autoantibodies associated with Sjögren’s syndrome in the papers presented, there is a fascinating epidemiological study of dry eyes and mouth amongst Swedish adults reported by Jacobson et al. Troy Daniels also contributes a useful chapter on clinical assessment and diagnosis of Sjögren’s syndrome, though it is noticeable that the thorny issue of precisely how this disease should be diagnosed is not really touched upon.

The only surprising inclusion in this volume is a paper by Sylvestris et al concerning studies of systemic lupus erythematosus kindreds, which simply seems out of place. Finally, it should be mentioned that this volume had already appeared as an issue of the Journal of Autoimmunity.


A teaching file on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) might seem to have an exclusive relevance to radiologists or investigative workers in this relatively new imaging modality. These were my first thoughts on opening the book, but on more detailed examination I see that it does have a great deal to offer outside this narrow band of image viewers. Any new branch of science brings with it a whole new language, acronyms, and abbreviations; certainly, MRI is peppered with them. This text does not try to explain the concepts underlying MRI. As rheumatologists are supposed to know the immunological jargon for killer cells and helper cells, so the reader of this book is assumed to know the meaning of terms like T1, T2, TR, TE. Even if one does not understand the principles of MRI, however, the introductory section will show what may be achieved by variations in these parameters. How many of us understand the ‘modus operandi’ of all the knobs on our HI fi, but we try turning them on and off to see what happens. As we are not able to play around with the controls on the MRI equipment this book does it for us. Clinical cases are illustrated with alterations in some of the parameters to show how the images are affected. Questions are posed and answered to illustrate the functions and explain how they change the images.

Subsequent sections in this book are devoted to regions of the locomotor system. Introducing each section, the authors recount techniques and pitfalls of imaging the area in question. The case presentations include clinical questions followed by the magnetic resonance images, usually including a radiograph. The diagnoses, interpretation of the images, and a discussion in each case are well done.

As this volume is a teaching file it is not a comprehensive atlas. Don’t expect to find rheumatoid disease of the small joints of the hands and feet. It is, however, necessary for clinicians to interpret the investigations we perform on our patients, and this book would certainly teach these skills for MRI. Furthermore, the quality of the images is, for the most part, good enough to use as a reference book. Now that MRI is becoming more available I would happily recommend this book for departmental libraries. The authors are acknowledged leaders in their field.