Notes and news

The Volvo awards for low back pain research 1993

To encourage research in low back pain the Volvo Company of Göteborg, Sweden, has again sponsored three prizes of $9000 each. Awards will be made competitively on the basis of scientific merit in one or more of the following three areas: (a) clinical studies; (b) bioengineering studies; (c) studies in other basic science areas.

Papers submitted must contain original material, not previously published or submitted for publication. Multiple authorship is acceptable. Papers should be written in English and must be received not later than 2 December 1992. Articles sent by fax will not be accepted.

One of the authors should be prepared, at his/her own expense, to come to Marseille, France, at the time of the meeting of the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine, 15–19 June 1993, to present the paper and to receive the award.

The board of referees will be chaired by Professor Nachemson and will contain members from the fields of clinical medicine, bioengineering, and biochemistry.

For further details please apply to: Professor Alf Nachemson, Department of Orthopaedics, Sahlgren Hospital, S-413 45 Göteborg, Sweden.

XVIIIth ILAR congress of rheumatology

The XVIIIth ILAR congress of rheumatology will be held in Barcelona from 4 to 10 July 1993. Languages will be English, French, Catalan, and Spanish. Deadline for submission of abstracts is 30 November 1992.

Further details from: Congress Secretariat, Viajes Iberia Congresos, Diagonal, 523, 08029 Barcelona, Spain. Tel: 34 3 419 51 51. Fax: 34 3 405 13 90.

Book reviews

All titles reviewed here are available from the BMJ Bookshop, PO Box 295, London WC1H 9TE. Prices include postage in the United Kingdom and for members of the British Forces Overseas, but overseas customers should add 15% to the value of the order for postage and packing. Payment can be made by cheque in sterling drawn on a UK bank, or by credit card (Mastercard, Visa, or American Express) stating card number, expiry date, and full name.


Do we really need another rheumatology journal? My initial response was ‘No’, but I have changed my mind having read through the first volume of this Rheumatology Review. If it maintains the high standard of writing and content and fulfils its stated aim of producing a three year cycle covering the major topics in rheumatology, it will be a valuable addition to any departmental or personal library. Although the concept of a regularly updated textbook is not new, this one will be welcomed by rheumatologists. Four volumes a year, the first of some 60 pages, are relatively comfortable amounts to absorb. The information is approachable and up to date, written by acknowledged experts. It will need a yearly cumulative index if it is to remain helpful to refer back to at a later stage.

The proposed structure of each volume is interesting and varied with clinical, scientific, and biographical topics. Thus in the first volume under the heading ‘Aetiology-genesis’ is an excellent, well written article on osteoarthritis, under ‘Diagnosis’ an equally good analysis of the differential diagnosis of children with musculoskeletal complaints, and under ‘Management’ the clinical approach to back pain and the prolapsed disc. There are other articles on setting up a computer database, a review of renal scleroderma, and a science update on cytokines and bone function. A brief biography of Arthur Garrod and a clinical case round off the volume.

This series promises well as a readable and varied update for the busy rheumatologist. I recommend that it be considered seriously.

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The author’s thesis on computer aided decision making in rheumatology is published here. It comprises a collection of published papers by the author on various aspects of his research work together with an introduction and conclusion written especially for the thesis. His research work was principally the validation of the AI/RHEUM knowledge base and development of a new computer system designed to aid diagnosis in rheumatology outpatient departments.

The introduction and conclusion would be useful to those new to the subject, explaining both the theoretical basis for the development of such systems and the problems and advantages inherent in using them. The individual papers included in the book are also of interest, but as a whole the book suffers because of the nature of its component parts. Repetition is inevitable and the chapters vary in their degree of technicality. The specialist would presumably already be familiar with the contents of the published work, whereas the general reader would not find a clear narrative structure that would be provided by a well edited review.

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