

- Contact: Fourth International Conference on Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, PO Box 50006, Tel Aviv 61500, Israel
- 4-7 Apr BSR XIIth AGM, Glasgow  
Contact: British Society for Rheumatology, Anne Mansfield, Deputy Executive Secretary, 3 St Andrew's Place, London NW1 4LB. Tel: 071 224 3739. Fax: 071 224 0156
- 7 Apr British Health Professionals in Rheumatology AGM during BSR AGM  
Contact: British Health Professionals in Rheumatology, c/o BSR, Anne Mansfield, Deputy Executive Secretary, 3 St Andrew's Place, Regents Park, London NW1 4LB. Tel: 071 224 3739. Fax: 071 224 0156
- 18-24 June 13th European congress of rheumatology (EULAR), Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
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new chapter on manipulation has been added to this second edition and is disappointingly negative with no mention of the controlled trials that have appeared in the English literature over recent years.

The chapter on chemonucleolysis is also very disappointing with only two references later than 1977 and none later than 1986. Admittedly, I am an enthusiast for this technique but to condemn a technique without references to double blind comparative studies, for example, Fraser R D, *Spine*, vol 7; 1982: 608-17, is unacceptable in a text of this size.

The high points of this book for me were the excellent chapter on electromyography which is well written and referenced and gives a balanced view of this useful and frequently forgotten investigation, and also Tom Mayers chapter on functional restoration in which he reviews the rehabilitation of the spine which is fundamental to the success of any surgical intervention.

Overall, I find it difficult to recommend this book which in parts is already out of date, is very surgically orientated and has a strong transatlantic bias.

Unlike the wines from California this book has not travelled well.

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**Behcet's disease: basic and clinical aspects.** Eds J D O'Duffy, E Kokmen. (Pp 679; \$175.) New York: Dekker, 1991. ISBN 0 8247 8476 6.

This book represents the papers presented at the 1989 Fifth International Conference on Behcet's disease. As such it is a set of conference proceedings rather than a book. It could therefore not be recommended to the novice reader who wishes to find out more about this disease. It is divided into four main sections but the quality of individual chapters varies enormously. The range is from single case reports, small case series, uncontrolled clinical trials through to properly conducted randomised trials. Unfortunately, most chapters tend to start with an introduction attempting to summarise the main features of Behcet's syndrome, and this does get a little repetitive. The highlights of the book are chapter two, where diagnostic classification criteria have been analysed and compared; the overview chapter on T cell immunoregulation and microbial causes of Behcet's disease (chapter 66) is also worthy of mention.

In the final section on treatment a number of protocols are suggested. Few of these, however, are properly controlled clinical trials, but those that are, are at an early stage as yet involving relatively small numbers. It seems a pity that the long term treatment with penicillin in 200 cases could not have been randomised (chapter 90). On the other hand, the chapter on topical alpha interferon treatment of oral ulcers seemed promising (chapter 92), but requires longer term follow up with larger numbers. Perhaps the most enlightening chapter was the survey on the treatment of Behcet's disease (chapter 89) which highlights the vast heterogeneity of current clinical practice on its management.

The book certainly represents a huge world wide experience of Behcet's disease and therefore for the more experienced reader there are some elegant descriptions of some of the HLA associations of the clinical manifestations of the disease, experimental work on aetiology and pathogenesis, and some work on various treatment modalities.

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## Book reviews

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**Lumbar Disc Disease**, 2nd edition. Ed Russell W Hardy, Jr. (Pp 362; \$157.50.) New York: Raven Press, 1993. ISBN 0-88167-951-8.

"Lumbar disc lesions are not the sole cause of sciatica and lower back pain but merely the most frequent". Most of us would accept this opening remark from an impressive looking second edition of this book on lumbar disc disease from the USA. To this could be added that the vast majority of these problems are either self limiting or respond to conservative treatment. To the rheumatologist the balance of this book will probably appear too surgically orientated, with 11 of the 31 chapters dealing solely with surgery of the spine. Many of the other chapters are very surgically orientated, including two salutary chapters on surgical complications. This is perhaps not surprising as the vast majority of the contributors are either neuro- or orthopaedic surgeons and the book is edited by a neurosurgeon.

The three chapters on conservative management are brief and two are written by surgeons and one by a neurologist. A