Notes/News

Forthcoming events

In 1995

2-4 Mar
Biologic Agents in Autoimmune Diseases IV, San Francisco, California, USA
Contact: Marianne H Kaple, MD, Arthritis Foundation, 1314 Spring Street, NW Atlanta, Georgia 30309, USA. Tel: (404) 872-7100 ext. 6296. Fax: (404) 872-0457

9-10 Mar
Work related arm pain—a critical evaluation of causation, Nottingham University, Nottingham
Contact: Mr Tim Davis, University Department of Orthopaedics, Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham NG7 2UH. Tel: (0) 602 709448

26-31 Mar
Fourth international conference on systemic lupus erythematosus, Jerusalem, Israel
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

10-14 May
Third International Symposium on the Immuno-therapy of the Rheumatic Diseases, Cyprus
Contact: Symposium Secretary, Rheumatology Unit, 4th Floor Hunt’s House, Guy’s Hospital, London SE1 9RT, United Kingdom. Tel: (071) 959 4394. Fax: (0)71 407 5134.

27-31 May
International Congress on Rehabilitation Medicine, Istanbul, Turkey
Contact: Prof Dr Önder Kayhan, Congress Secretariat, PO Box 1 81021 Kozuyolu, Istanbul, Turkey. Tel: 90 216 3263443. Fax: 90 216 3263443

18-22 June
22nd annual meeting of The International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine, Helsinki, Finland
Contact: Dr Bjorn Rydevik, ISSLS, Sunnybrook Medical Centre, Room A 309, 2075 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4N 3M5. Tel: 416-480-4833. Fax: 416-480-6055

18-24 June
13th European congress of rheumatology (EULAR), Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Contact: EUROCONGRES, Koningslaan 52, NL-1075 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tel: 31(0)20 6793411. Fax: 31(0)20 6737306

30 July- 3 Aug
3rd World congress on myofascial pain and fibromyalgia, San Antonio, Texas, USA
Contact: Jon Russell, MD, PhD, Chairman, Organising Committee, Department of Medicine, University of Texas Health Science Center, 7703 Floyd Curl Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78284-7874, USA. Tel: (210) 567 4661. Fax: (210) 567 4654

14-15 Sep
Heberden Round, Dr T Hothersall, Keele University
Contact: British Society for Rheumatology, Anne Mansfield, Deputy Executive Secretary, 3 St Andrew’s Place, Regents Park, London NW1 4LB. Tel: 071 224 3739. Fax: 071 224 0156

19-25 Nov
Contact: Publicity Manager, International Seminars Department (Seminar 5956), The British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN. Tel: 0159 8264/4162/4226. Fax: 0159 389 4154

4-5 Dec
International Symposium of Immuno-Rheumatology (main topic: New tools for diagnosis and therapeutics in rheumatic diseases), Montpellier, France
Contact: Professor J Sany, Service d’Immunologie-Rhumatologie, Hôpital Gui-de-Chauliac, 34295 Montpellier cedex 5, France. Tel: (33) 67 33 72 31. Fax: (33) 67 61 97 31

Book reviews


This is part of an ongoing series entitled “A Handbook of Immunopharmacology” the aim of which, as stated in the foreword, is to provide a “focal information source for pharmacologists with an interest in diseases affecting the immune system”. Other books already in the series focus on more basic immunological subjects such as cells and mediators, and other body systems such as the gastrointestinal system, heart, or kidneys. Volumes in preparation focus on various drugs such as glucocorticosteroids and immuno-suppressive drugs. This particular volume is intended to focus on joints and connective tissue, particularly, it may be presumed, on those aspects which are amenable to immunological intervention. In this respect it resembles the apocryphal curate’s egg. Certain chapters are extremely interesting but barely pharmacological, whilst others which do focus on drug intervention are barely immunological.

Even if one discards the idea of a particularly pharmacological emphasis, the basis chapters are strangely chosen. The initial chapter is a classical review of autoimmunity and includes various autoantibody mediated diseases, ranging from haemolytic anaemia through pernicious anaemia to myasthenia gravis and diabetes, which have little to do with joints and connective tissues. Very little of this introduction is picked up in subsequent chapters. There is then a review on immunological tolerance which is fascinating and well written, but relatively tenuously connected with the remainder of the book. The three chapters on monoclonal antibody therapy and peptide blockade are more clearly appropriate and, for the most part, informative and well written. There are then three chapters entirely or largely focusing on cytokines in which, unfortunately, there is a certain amount of overlap. The last purely immunological chapter, on inflammatory reactions in arthritis, has a rather old fashioned and histopathological feel. It would be rather difficult for the newcomer to the field, without a clear medical or pathological background, to integrate the information obtained in this chapter into a clear model of the diseases described.
The book is lacking in other important areas, notably the immunopharmacology of those drugs already used in the treatment of rheumatic diseases. The authors state in their preface that "it can be argued that the major advances in the treatment of inflammatory arthritis diseases... have sprung from the discovery of corticosteroids". It is perhaps somewhat surprising, therefore, that in this volume these drugs are barely mentioned! Another surprising omission, particularly in view of the inclusion of two chapters on the enzymatic destruction of bone and cartilage, which can barely be construed as immunological, is the absence of any significant contribution on free radicals.

In summary, rather than a clearly focused book, this is a collection of reviews of somewhat loosely connected areas. My advice to prospective readers would be to borrow a copy and to read the chapters in which they are interested, each of which can be considered as an authoritative review of its particular areas. However, I doubt that anybody, particularly a newcomer to the field, would find in this volume the comprehensive review of the field to which the series aspires.

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Guy's Hospital, London SE1 9RT,
United Kingdom


Why buy a new textbook on rheumatology? The information contained in it is often available in more up-to-date form in monographs and original papers, and the cost is increasingly a major disincentive. Rheumatology, however, manages to quell all such thoughts. Put simply, this is a superb textbook which manages amply to demonstrate how such textbooks can survive into the electronic age.

The first thing that strikes one about the book is its high production values and sheer visual attractiveness. As the figure demonstrates, the excellent illustrations and widespread use of colour appeal to the eye and make browsing a pleasure. The colour coding of the chapters, whilst a little unfamiliar at first, enable the reader rapidly to look up both specific topics and more general sections. In addition, each chapter has a very structured layout enabling one to find out rapidly about particular areas of each disease, for example epidemiology, investigations etc.

Generally the content is broad and comprehensive, which means that the book will serve as a ready reference for both the practising rheumatologist and those from other specialties who require access to authoritative information. It is well written with a friendly, easy-to-read style which should encourage use by students. The structured layout also means that authors have not avoided issues with which they are uncomfortable in order to concentrate on pet topics or minutiae. Indeed, for those interested, there are valuable chapters on joint physiology and biomechanics, history, embryology etc. Disease mechanisms and pathology are also well covered, but the well designed and structured layout enable those seeking a more clinical approach to move quickly through these, unrestricted by a mass of information, to get to the practical pearls. There are nevertheless a few areas that are less well covered, for example the extra-articular manifestations of rheumatoid arthritis.

The use of sections devoted to practical problems is a very attractive and interesting part of the book. Topics as diverse as instability of the cervical spine, painful implants, shoulder pain in the elderly and drugs in OA; treating the elderly patient are tackled in a way that illuminates important clinical problems, giving practical advice, and highlighting areas of controversy.

If there are criticisms, these are mainly the result of the multiple authorship. There are different views expressed regarding management, for example, and the international flavour of the authorship means that treatment modalities may not always reflect local practice. For example, in the section on rheumatoid arthritis, sulphasalazine is perhaps given less emphasis than would reflect its use in the UK. These are minor points, however, and are bound to arise in any large international textbook on a subject in which consensus is always hard to achieve. Indeed, the editors are to be praised for attracting such a diverse spread of international figures and achieving such a broad coverage of topics.

One could argue that this book is not filling a gap in the market, as it is competing with several well-established texts. In our opinion, however, this book takes on the established names extremely well and in terms of presentation and visual impact has no serious rival. Although expensive, the cost does not appear excessive given the quality of the finished product and, all in all, the editors have succeeded in producing an excellent, very attractive book which should be on the shelves of every rheumatologist and in every departmental library.

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Representative page from Klippel and Dieppe's Rheumatology.


It has been apparent for some time that there was a gap in the market for a modern 'British' textbook covering the rheumatic diseases. This required an editorial board with sufficient energy and enthusiasm to complete such a project. The editors should be congratulated on achieving their aim. Now the reader is spoilt for choice with the near simultaneous launch of two works, The Oxford Textbook and Klippel and Dieppe's Rheumatology.