

reading medical journals. The second is frustrated by the availability of too few statisticians for any businesslike approach to obtaining statistical advice to be possible.

Statistics in Practice loosens the first bind substantially. A full time College statistician at members' disposal would loosen the second.

N. I. H. BRADLEY
General Practitioner, Exeter

RHEUMATOLOGY IN GENERAL PRACTICE

Michael Rogers, Norman Williams

Churchill Livingstone
Edinburgh (1982)

266 pages. Price £7.50

Musculoskeletal disorders form a large part of the general practice workload, and they not infrequently tax our diagnostic and management capabilities. This is an area of clinical care, however, which has been sadly neglected at all

levels of medical training until quite recently. Only now are we waking up to the fact that what we need in the way of expertise is not what has been customarily on offer from training, books, meetings and courses.

A hearty welcome, therefore, to this clear, concise and practical manual which really gets to grips with the demands of rheumatology. Distinguishing the commoner disorders, investigating them, picking one's way through the maze of anti-inflammatory drugs; it is all here and plenty more. The authors are a general practitioner/clinical assistant and his consultant colleague, and they open with five introductory chapters covering general aspects, such as incidence, symptomatology, general principles of management and straightforward investigation.

The advice is sound, though in places a little over-cautious. For instance, under x-rays we are told that 'the patient with . . . inflammatory arthropathy is obviously going to be referred to hospital for further management.' The indispensability of the consultant dies hard.

In contrast there is an excellent section on steroid injections, the judicious use of which in general practice has saved many a patient unnecessary discomfort waiting for the clinic appointment which never seems to arrive. After a section on the commoner arthritides, regional problems of neck, arm, back and leg are given excellent coverage.

The only major quibble I have is with the final chapter—'The disabled patient'. Systematic management of arthritic disablement is an area for the concerned and conscientious family doctor and should have been allocated more space.

The only other alterations for the next edition are minor ones. A profusion of spelling mistakes and some inconsistencies tend to confuse. Very much up with the times, however, are the final 30 pages of self-assessment. Rheumatology in general practice is not for slackers.

TIM PAINE
*General Practitioner and
Clinical Assistant
in Rheumatology, Bristol*

BOOKS FOR PATIENTS

TAKING THE STRAIN

Robert Eagle

BBC Publications
London (1982)

96 pages. Price £2.75

A useful book-of-the-film which can be easily recommended to anyone who seriously wants to learn how to relax through biofeedback, autogenic training, hypnosis, yoga, meditation or massage. The book is based on the BBC series *Taking the Strain*.

THE NO-DIET BOOK

Michael Spira

Fontana
London (1982)

156 pages. Price £1.50

Most of what the author tells us is unexceptionable, being based on common sense (which is nowadays, and in this book particularly, called behaviour modification). The message, encapsulated in 30 'rules' boils down to two things: eat a little less than you think you need,

and always stop eating as soon as you no longer feel hungry. It is not a simple business, and requires a good deal of work, but it does appear (no scientifically acceptable evidence is offered) likely to work, and to those many desperate people, patients and doctors alike, this book will hold out much hope.

PARKINSON'S DISEASE. THE FACTS

Gerald Stern, Andrew Lees

Oxford University Press
(1982)

74 pages. Price £5.95

Indeed the facts, but written in over-technical language, mixed with much irrelevant material and with some illustrations that would do for a medical textbook. Most sufferers would be better advised to join the Parkinson's Disease Society (81 Queen's Road, London SE19 8NR).

FOOD FOR ARTHRITICS

Judy Andrews, Jim Andrews

Faber & Faber
London (1982)

187 pages. Price £6.95 (hardback),
£2.95 (paperback)

Based on the personal experience of one of the authors, who was told he had 'arthritis, not rheumatoid', who came across the Dong diet, tried it and lost all

his pain. The diet forbids all animal products (but not fish) and fruit (but not vegetables) with the theoretical aim of eliminating 'toxic substances and anogens'. The book contains many recipes that are straightforward and practical. It can be safely recommended on culinary grounds, whatever one's scepticism is about the scientific evidence for the diet.

THE FAMILY GOOD HEALTH GUIDE: COMMON SENSE ON COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS

John Fry, Alistair Moulds, Gillian Strube, Eric Gambrell

MTP
Lancaster (1982)

292 pages. Price £9.95

Fry for the middle classes. The tenor of the text and many of the figures are reproduced from medical textbooks by him. Some of the writing seems unduly influenced by the fact that the authors are all doctors (phrases like 'joints may become mechanically deranged'). Nevertheless, there is a great deal of valuable material here—the emphasis on self-care, sound commonsense, the wise advice to put up with what is not life-threatening, and the useful guides to who does what in the care of pregnant women and children.

S .B.