

## Book reviews

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### Soft Tissue Rheumatology

Editors: B. Hazleman, G. Riley, C. Speed  
Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 568, illustrated  
ISBN 019 263093 8

Rheumatologists usually focus their attention on the more "noble" diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and the connective tissue diseases, but the real world of outpatient activity is much more varied and many patients present with disorders of the musculoskeletal soft connective tissues. One of the difficulties relating to these diseases is the lack of generally accepted definitions, diagnostic criteria and therapies, but above all many rheumatologists have only limited knowledge of those pathologies.

*Soft Tissue Rheumatology* is entirely devoted to the multifarious disorders involving tissues such as the tendon, ligament, sheath, capsule, bursa, intervertebral disc and meniscus, in order to provide rheumatologists and other medical doctors with complete information regarding the anatomy, pathology, physical examination and treatment of these conditions. In its various chapters: 1. The science of soft tissue disorders; 2. The science of pain from theory to clinical practice; 3. Biomechanics and locomotion; 4. General principles; 5.

Principles of management; and 6. Specific soft tissue disorders (part 6), the authors explain everything that is presently known about these diseases in an accessible and not overly technical manner. The chapters are amply illustrated with colour photographs, graphs and diagrams. This textbook should enable readers to understand which kind of pain and disorder the patient has, and guide them from the definition to the epidemiology, clinical features, pathogenesis and, finally, management of the disease.

The references in each chapter are very complete and, considering the time needed to write and edit such a comprehensive textbook, quite up-to-date. The illustrations are extremely clear, showing the anatomy as well as illustrating the physical examinations that the patient should undergo. This book provides a useful overview of musculoskeletal soft tissue disorders, and I strongly recommend it to clinicians specializing in rheumatology, orthopedics, and sports medicine but also to general practitioners and medical students who are interested in the broad and fascinating field of the soft tissue disorders.

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### Oxford Textbook of Rheumatology

Editors: D.A. Isenberg, P.J. Maddison, P. Woo, D. Glass & F.C. Breedveld  
Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 1,278, illustrated  
ISBN 0 19 850948 0

Rheumatic conditions are common both in general and hospital practice and are a major source of morbidity and mortality, but continue to go unrecognized and underdiagnosed by physicians. This is the third edition of the exhaustive and authoritative *Oxford Textbook of Rheumatology*. As in the first two editions, this textbook focuses on arguments that often are not thoroughly covered, but which are of primary importance in clinical practice and for a global approach to the rheumatic diseases.

The volume is divided into 6 sections. In the first section the clinical presentation of the rheumatic diseases, articular function, visceral involvement and rheumatic manifestations in different age groups are explained. Specific chapters focus on children, adolescence, and pregnancy. Assessment of outcome and quality of life of rheumatic patients, with particular regard to rehabilitation and disability in both children and

adults, is described in section 2. The physiopathology of the rheumatic diseases is explained in the following two sections. In a discipline in rapid evolution, it must be stressed that the references have been updated to 2001. Section 5 focuses on diagnostics, with chapters on routine biochemical samples, histopathologic research, and imaging studies.

Section 6, in more than 600 pages, provides an analysis of the scope of rheumatic disease, including diseases of low frequency. A long chapter is devoted to arthropathies primarily occurring in childhood and to rare rheumatic conditions such as familial Mediterranean fever and amyloidosis. Finally, the last section is reserved for surgical intervention, corticosteroid injection therapy, and sports medicine.

*The Oxford Textbook of Rheumatology* can be highly recommended to specialists, but also to students who need to study a specific area. The up-to-date and exhaustive coverage of its subject matter makes this an invaluable reference text that will remain authoritative for a long time to come.

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