

## REVIEWS

## PRINCIPLES OF BONE X-RAY DIAGNOSIS

George Simon, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.F.R. (232 pages, 343 illustrations, £9.80)  
Butterworth. Third Edition 1973

X-ray diagnosis of the skeletal system, as of many other systems of the body, is made on observations of a single basic change or a combination of basic changes. The changes in the skeleton may take the form of focal or widespread decrease in the bone density, or conversely increase in bone density, periosteal new bone formation, changes in the surrounding soft tissue, and alteration in the shape and position of the affected bone.

Yet, on the basis of these fundamental changes, and taking note of the site or sites of involvement and variations in the appearance of the changes, it is possible for a radiologist to arrive at an accurate diagnosis in many cases or come close to it by offering a short list of 2, 3 or 4 likely conditions.

The logical approach to X-ray bone diagnosis lies in the recognition of the basic changes in their various forms and Dr. George Simon is probably the first to present this objective and analytical method in book form. He has in fact prepared the ground for computerisation of X-ray bone diagnosis.

Dr. Simon offers a horizontal outlook in contrast to that of the standard textbooks which deal with the subject matter in terms of disease entities. In view of the vastness and complexity of the scope involved, it calls for great ingenuity and skill in arrangement and the author has handled this very well.

A third edition of his book, first published in 1960, has been issued—a reliable criterion of the popularity of the series. Compared with the first edition, 54 pages and 99 new illustrations have been added. The chapter on widespread and regional reduction in bone density has been rewritten in collaboration with a physician, Dr. N.J.Y. Woodhouse.

It is worth mentioning that the X-ray reproductions are excellent and a joy to look at. This is a very important feature of an X-ray book or journal and has regrettably been overlooked by some publishers.

The success of a book of this nature may be judged by how much assistance it can give a clinician in his day-to-day practice. I believe the book will be a great help to the radiologist and orthopaedic surgeon when confronted with a thorny problem. This book will provide a ready means of reference as it is simple enough and yet quite comprehensive.

The acid test in orthopaedic diagnosis is in the differentiation of bone tumours. The subject is made particularly difficult by the overlap of radiological features found in many of these conditions as well as of clinical and histological features. It is a great pity that in this particular field the book does not give much inspiration to a harassed diagnostician.

Shortcomings are always present in any book if one chooses to look for them. I thought sections of the text on bone pathology have not been sufficiently updated. For instance, remarks on the disease process of osteochondritis have remained unchanged since the first edition when in fact much progress has been made in the understanding of this disorder. The term osteoclastoma is still retained in preference to the more widely adopted form of giant-cell tumour.

As this book deals with basic principles of X-ray diagnosis, one cannot expect the inclusion of every orthopaedic condition. However, it is interesting to note that while clubfoot diagnosis is discussed, the diagnosis of the common condition of flat-feet is left out. Several methods are available for measuring the curvature of scoliosis but it is not clear which method is used in the book.

In summary, this is a useful practical book. Allowing for deficiencies (which are to be found in any book), it provides a concise guide to the diagnosis of bone diseases for radiologists and orthopaedic surgeons. Radiological trainees should find this book stimulating and helpful.

C. L. Oon

MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE AND TOXICOLOGY BY RAJINDER S. GREWAL PUBLISHED BY SCIENTIFIC BOOK AGENCY, 22 RAJA WOODMUNT STREET, CALCUTTA  
I. PAPER BOUND EDITION, 385 PAGES. 1973

Lack of interest in Forensic Medicine, laments the author, is due to the fact that specialisation in this field is not at all lucrative and yields no dividend like the specialisation in medicine, surgery, obstetrics and diseases of children. Therefore, very few doctors specialise in this branch of medicine. There is some truth in this statement, in addition, the nature of work does not appeal to many doctors. Nevertheless, doctors will be called to courts to testify as witnesses some time in their career and inadequate training in this respect will result in embarrassment.

The book is divided into two parts—Jurisprudence and Toxicology with specialist contributions on gun shot wounds, blood, serology and medical negligence. The content of the book follows the standard textbooks in Medical Jurisprudence and Toxicology. The book is meant as a textbook for use of the students of the medical colleges of India. Illustrations are kept to a minimum and most of which that appeared are borrowed from Glaister's Medical Jurisprudence and Toxicology as the author's own collections were lost during the Second World War. This is a pity as most of the illustrations such as hypostasis, drowning, hanging, cut throats etc. are encountered regularly in a routine Forensic Practice, and photographs should be easily obtainable.

Besides printer's errors, the book contains certain inaccurate statements and passages that are difficult to comprehend. For example, on page 4 a coroner is said to have powers to hold an inquiry and not a trial, and subsequently he can "acquit the accused." On page 91, it is said that sudden death may be due to rupture of the heart due to previous attack of coronary occlusion leaving an old scar. On page 121, under the discussion on head injury, there is mention of the term "Pigeon's Egg" as a variety of injury and tumour without explaining the nature of the tumour. On page 290 in the chapter on Forensic Pyschiatry it is stated that "No intelligent man has idiot's eyes and no idiot has intelligent eyes". This may be an over simplification of the situation. In the Glossary an "Infarct" is defined as "a dead mass stuck in blood vessels" and "Erysiples" as "inflammation of skin with margins."

One special feature of the book is the paragraph on points to note following each section. These contain useful advice to show that the author has extensive court experience. Many practical points are raised and the common pitfalls exposed in court procedures are pointed out. The specialist chapters are well written. This could be useful as a practical handbook.

Dr. CHAO TZEE CHENG

\* \* \* \* \*  
PRACTICAL OPHTHALMOLOGIST  
By Arthur Lim and Khoo Chong Yew

A local attempt at presenting some of the more common practical problems facing the ophthalmologist and the varying ways other surgeons in different parts of the world tackle them. One will notice some similarity between this publication and the internationally known Highlights of Ophthalmology. There are some good photographs.

The material is largely presented in the form of questions by the editors and answers by various ophthalmologists. The subject dealt with are not done in sufficient depth to satisfy the most inquisitive reader, but this is hardly possible because of the nature of the publication. The varying

answers given in the section on cataract surgery only serves to underline the old and still very true saying that there are 1001 ways of performing a cataract operation well, and to each his own way.

An interesting section is the evaluation of acupuncture anaesthesia in China. Although given in several pages it says very little that is related to ocular surgery.

This is a collection of opinions of the editors and other ophthalmologists brought together in a volume dedicated to Professor Ida Mann, a well known and respected ophthalmologist.

## TROPICAL PATHOLOGY

Herbert Spencer, Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg New York, 765 Pages

This book attempts to cover as wide as possible the pathology of disease prevalent in tropical countries. It includes contributions from such diverse disciplines as morbid anatomists, tropical medicine experts, haematologists and even a neuropathologist.

It is extremely well illustrated and most of the pictures are very good except for a few of the low power photomicrographs which do not serve any useful purpose.

The text is well planned, concise and easily read. No one should expect minute details in a volume covering such a wide subject matter, but most of the salient points are there. The

chapters on parasitology in particular protozoology are excellent. The chapter on blood diseases should probably be best omitted, as with the exception of anaemias caused by protozoa and helminth infestations, none can be said to be truly more prevalent in the tropics.

This manual should prove to be a very useful guide for doctors practising in those less fortunate countries where the "tropical" nature of many of the diseases is really not due to the climate, but rather to certain agricultural practices and the lack of proper public health and sanitary facilities.

**Dr. James C.C. Hoo**

---