
Professor Mastaglia has assembled a formidable international team to produce this "state of the art" account of the inflammatory myopathies which collectively constitute the commonest acquired disorders of skeletal muscle seen in clinical practice. Inevitably a great deal of attention has been focused on the putative immunopathogenesis of the idiopathic inflammatory myopathies (polymyositis and dermatomyositis) and their treatment. However three chapters detail the clinical features, pathology and management of the infective myositis which are, of course, of paramount importance in the Third World.

Considering the volume of information on the inflammatory myopathies and their associated immune phenomena which has accumulated during the last decade particularly, the appearance of such a monograph is timely (it is the first since Walton and Adams' seminal contribution 30 years ago). Certainly this monograph gives a comprehensive account of all aspects of inflammatory muscle disease and is likely to be an extremely useful reference source for some time to come. This reviewer found Targoff and Reichlin's chapter on "Immunological Aspects" particularly helpful. The authors give a detailed and lucid analysis of the burgeoning literature of both cellular and humoral immune mechanisms in "idiopathic" inflammatory myopathy (including a review of their own numerous contributions). One cannot help but be persuaded by the evidence they have marshalled and their conclusion that this evidence "strongly supports an immunological pathogenesis . . ." for these disorders.

The remaining chapters give detailed and profusely illustrated clinicopathological accounts of polymyositis and dermatomyositis, in children and adults, once again with the emphasis on their likely immunopathogenesis (Mastaglia comments upon a degree of overlap amongst these chapters which, quite clearly, cannot be avoided).

There are few criticisms of any importance. However Pamphlett's chapter on the technical details of muscle biopsy sits rather uneasily between Sir John Walton's polished description of the clinical feature of inflammatory myopathies and the chapter on immunology discussed above. One seriously questions the need for this kind of detail which can be found in the many other texts on neuromuscular disorders available currently, especially since the photomicrographs in this chapter illustrate anything but inflammatory myopathy! Some of the other microphotographs (of paraffin-embedded tissue) leave a lot to be desired, particularly in the final chapter on "miscellaneous conditions" (Fig 10.9 is an outstandingly bad example).

Professor Mastaglia and his collaborators are to be congratulated on this literary milestone in the study of inflammatory muscle disease.

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There are few texts that provide an authoritative and comprehensive account of physical treatments in psychiatry. Many textbooks of psychiatry gloss over psychopharmacology, failing to give proper consideration to the wide range of drugs available for treatment, and the often subtle differences between them. Electroconvulsive therapy is often discussed without a clear presentation of the principles underlying it, and such important issues as different methods of electrode placement and current applications are neglected. Psychosurgery is rarely considered. This book comprehensively reviews all these three areas, providing an excellent reference text, but in addition a useful practical manual. Each section is preceded by a lengthy historical introduction which reminds the reader of the long struggle towards the development of effective physical treatments that we are so lucky to have in psychiatric practice today. The section on psychosurgery is one of the most comprehensive, up-to-date accounts that this reviewer has come across in any recent textbook, and the psychopharmacology section is excellent with most of the newer psychotropic agents mentioned, with the exception of the selective 5HT uptake inhibitors that have recently become available.

There is a brief section on dubious therapies, which include prolonged narcosis