the use of ‘bold’ entries to emphasize importance in the index of page references. Competitors will have a hard task to carve a share in a market this book rightly dominates.

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This sixth edition of the major British textbook of rheumatology is nearly twice the size of its predecessor. The two volumes are lavishly produced, with plenty of excellent photographs, mostly monochrome but some in colour. The type is large and readable, the paper thick. It is a pity that a number of misprints and spelling mistakes escaped correction (Eisenberg for Isenberg and Schober for Schöber for example). The writing is generally elegant, discursive, and with a wealth of historical detail. As a consequence it lacks the fact-packed density of its American counterpart. The result is a book which is very readable, though not as useful as it might be for looking up particular queries.

The expansion consists partly of updating of existing chapters and partly of new material. The expanded section on connective tissue is clear and well illustrated. Immunogenetics is well covered, and the section dealing with the connective tissue diseases is improved by the inclusion of separate chapters on overlap and Sjögren’s syndromes. The addition of a chapter on modern imaging techniques is timely. The degree of updating is variable, some chapters being almost unchanged, some including references as recent as 1985, but most referring to nothing published after 1983. Given the increase in size and price I had expected more that was new in this edition. None the less this is an authoritative work which should be on the shelves of every hospital library and in every rheumatology department.

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This volume in the excellent ‘Handbook of Hypertension’ series gathers together much important information about hypertension that is not otherwise readily accessible. There are 10 sections, the first two being by no lesser authorities than G.A. Rose and W.B. Kannel, setting the scene for hypertension as a community problem and cause of cardiovascular disease. The third section has chapters concerned with blood pressure in relation to age and race and the next with psychosocial factors and with physical activity.

The largest section deals with diet and hypertension, with chapters on obesity, alcohol, sodium, potassium, trace metals, calcium, and fat. The next two sections provide chapters on mechanisms of blood pressure control in secondary hypertension and hypertension in relation to oral contraceptives, pregnancy and diabetes mellitus. The remaining three sections present chapters on community control of hypertension with an analysis of the large scale trials, approaches in different countries and practical aspects of community control such as patient compliance and cost effectiveness. There is a good index and the editorial control has been tight.

The management of the patient with hypertension demands an understanding of the many interacting personal and environmental factors that determine an individual’s blood pressure and risk of complications.

This book is a mine of the relevant information, synthesis of which provides the guidelines for patient care in hypertension. It can be strongly recommended for everyone in clinical hypertension practice and those concerned with public health and community aspects of hypertension and is a must for libraries as an invaluable source of reference.

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This massive and magnificent volume by Brostoff and Challacombe is likely to become a popular reference on food allergy and intolerance. This subject itself is somewhat shrouded in myth and medical uncertainty with a confusing extension of the concept of allergy to include anything which upsets or causes symptoms. There has been a gradual realisation that some substances such as aspirin and tartrazine exert a direct action on effector mechanisms without the intervention of the immune system, although they may more easily do this on a background of an existing true allergy where the balance of intracellular cyclic nucleotides has been disturbed. But it is still difficult to divorce these and other similar reactions from allergy in the popular mind, and indeed in many medical minds, and when this terminological imprecision is allied to purported additional effects of food, with symptoms not classically associated with allergy, and involving conditions in which psychosomatic factors are recognised to play an important part, then it is no wonder that the confusion deepens.

This book undoubtedly sets out to dispel this confusion, but I am not sure that it succeeds. It contains an impressive mélange of facts, ideas and opinions, skilfully and clearly presented by a host of writers with viewpoints from the scientific to the pragmatic. The chefs of this pot-pourri are themselves distinguished clinical immunologists, who in their introduction recognise the difference between true food allergy, involving immunologically mediated reactions to food antigens, and food intolerance, a more imprecise, but
nevertheless practically useful clinical diagnosis. Throughout the book there is a heavy levelling of orthodox immunological theory, with pointers to other mechanisms which may play a role, such as idiosyncratic metabolic defects, toxic additives.

The introductory chapters are a collection of well written articles on various aspects of mucosal immunology. The authors have gone to a lot of trouble to exhaust the information banks on their topics, as in the 20 page chapter (with 96 references) on gut-associated macrophages, by Bockman. Despite this wealth of information, the author had to admit in the conclusion to ‘… the paucity of our detailed knowledge about the role which macrophages play in food intolerance …’. For those whose physiology is rusty there is an excellent chapter on gut function by Mallinson in this section.

Later come interesting chapters on mucins by Clamp and lectins by Freed. Are these the missing links in the mechanisms which so many doctors (particularly among the contributors) believe are causing their patients’ food dependent symptoms? Although expounding the theoretical potential, neither author reported evidence supporting abnormalities of either mucin or response to lectins in patients with food allergy or food intolerance. Wright and Robertson do a service in drawing together many of the non-immune mechanisms by which substances in food cause gut damage.

The four chapters in the section 'Examples of Foods as Allergens' are illustrative of the varied approach in the book. Jean Monro is short on science and long on advice in her chapter about rotational diets, with appendices which are a food faddists dream. Gerrard presents both orthodox and unorthodox views of cows’ milk allergy, while the chapters on fish and egg white allergy, by Aas, are models of scientific exposition.

The third section of the book deals with end organ effects. This covers many of those clinical states in which the connection with food allergy is tenuous, to say the least. In discussing the mechanisms involved, in the first chapter of this section Jonathan Brostoff rightly points out that the cornerstone of the diagnosis of food sensitivity is clinical – the response of the patient’s symptoms to specific dietary manipulation. Beyond the well-known and accepted Gell and Coombs classification of immunological hypersensitivity, the abnormalities of metabolic pathways mentioned are all hopeful but as yet unproven explanations of why some patients become clinically ill after ingesting certain foods. The introduction of assorted data about disturbances of immune function in psychological states is presumably to lend credibility to the proposition that food intolerance can lead to behaviour disturbance, and conversely, that patients with psychological problems and stress may more easily develop food sensitivity to compound their symptoms. Among the chapters in this section there are a number which cover various neuropsychological disturbances, arthritis and renal diseases, all attributed to food sensitivity. It would be true to say that most of the claims in these sections are controversial.

This volume must have been a nightmare for the indexer since there is much repetition of ideas. Many authors quote their own or other workers’ suggestive but incomplete data in support of these ideas. There is a section on the APICH syndrome (Autoimmune, Polyendocrinopathy Immune dysregulation, Candidiasis, Hypersensitivity) by Saifer and Becker which links occult autoimmunity with allergy in a novel manner. The section on the diagnosis of food allergy is also covered by many authors presenting various ways of detecting this such as by exclusion diets, laboratory tests (including IgG4 antibodies), food challenges intradermal tests. Treatment and prevention are covered in four relatively short chapters, again with a mixture of orthodox methods such as avoidance and symptomatic pharmacotherapy to somewhat unorthodox regimes of transfer factor administration and hypersensitisation.

This is a book in which there is something for everyone which is why it will undoubtedly find its way onto the shelves of many departments with an interest in nutrition, immunology, allergy and much else besides. The editors have interpreted Sir Peter Medawar’s dictum about seeking to make the world a better place, by not excluding those with whom they disagree, and recognising that many patients have benefited symptomatically from both orthodox and more controversial approaches to this topic. However for the critical scientist this mixture can be somewhat unpalatable. At £75.00 it is more likely to be a departmental than an individual investment.

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This book is edited by two anaesthetists and has 22 other contributing authors; 11 of these are not anaesthetists but are geriatric experts. The stated aim of the book is ‘to explore the ageing process – how it occurs, how it affects specific organ systems – and examine ways it may influence clinical care when a patient is subjected to an operation’. The book has 15 chapters; the first 8 are devoted to the basic science of the ageing process and the remainder to the specific problems these processes create for the anaesthetist. It is unfortunate that the basic scientists and the anaesthetists ignore each other’s contribution – the first mention of anaesthesia is on page 97 at the beginning of chapter 4. The editors have not co-ordinated the book at all and as such it is a collection of essays. The comment of R.G. Merin at the beginning of chapter 10 aptly describes the limitations of the book. ‘If only the direct effects of anaesthetics on the ageing heart were to be considered in this chapter, then the text would be considerably shorter than what follows, because such studies are virtually non-existent.’ This book highlights the paucity of scientific data on the ageing process as well as the lack of well controlled studies of the effect of anaesthesia on the elderly. Apart from indicating a need for research in this area it has very little to offer the clinical anaesthetist.

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