THE POSTGRADUATE

Book Review Supplement

JUDET: RESECTION-RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HIP


In 1946 the Judet brothers first resected the head of femur and replaced it by a plastic head. They held this in position by a stem inserted through the femoral neck. Since then, they have performed 850 similar operations. Their procedure soon gained wide popularity, enthusiasm mounted, and even the diehards were forced to adopt it. Here, at last, seemed to be an answer to the painful osteoarthritic hip and to some femoral neck fractures. Soon, however, doubts appeared, then serious questionings, and finally an active rebellion against the Judet operation.

It is, therefore, of great topical interest to read this book by the Judet brothers and their collaborators. The book is finely produced, contains a lucid account of the operative technique (beautifully illustrated), and the indications and results of their first 400 cases. Their record system is admirable, and their success rate enviable. In spite of this the Judet operation is obviously becoming less and less popular in England. This decline is based upon criticisms which involve our fundamental conceptions of hip pathology.

Does the pain of an osteoarthritic hip originate in the femoral head itself, or in the capsule? The authors insist upon incriminating the head, which they resect; capsulectomy, they say, is unnecessary, gives no better results, and is indeed harmful, for it damages essential blood vessels. Many British surgeons, on the other hand, deny that the pain arises in the bone and insist upon thorough capsulectomy to denervate and render the hip painless. Again, many suspect that the femoral neck becomes eroded by constant pressure of the prosthesis which therefore loosens, and that a plastic head in time becomes abraded, with resulting incongruity and renewed pain. The authors deny both loosening and abrasion, providing meticulous technique is practised. The blood supply must be carefully preserved, the stem inserted at 130° to the shaft and neither in valgus nor varus, and the plastic head must fit with precision into a deep acetabulum with a good roof. Recently they have introduced a prosthesis of much harder resin and better designed to transmit strain to the strong calcar femorale.

Even so, many surgeons will prefer to perform capsulectomy, to remove much less of the femoral head, and to interpose a metal barier of the Smith-Peterson or Crawford-Adams type. Then, if pain returns, subsequent arthrodesis is easier to achieve. In fact, British surgeons prefer immediate arthrodesis for many of the conditions which the authors treat by resection-reconstruction. Arthrodesis, if other joints are supple, provides good function, and relief from pain which is permanent.

The book stimulates discussion; it should be read by all who are interested in hip surgery. The whole situation is excellently epitomized by K. I. Nissen in a pithy foreword. . . . 'This book will serve as the interim report of a bold long-term clinical trial pursued by its authors with remarkable constancy and with a fortunate tendency to simplification rather than to progressive technical elaboration.'

A.G.A.

Ciba Foundation Colloquia on Endocrinology

Vol. VII

SYNTHESIS AND METABOLISM OF ADRENOCORTICAL STEROIDS


The valuable series of Ciba Foundation Colloquia on Endocrinology are continued in this volume. It is an impressive account of recent advances in the knowledge of this important and expanding field. Although because of its complexity the subject matter will be of greatest interest to the specialist in this aspect of metabolism, the clinician can find in this volume much of interest, including a concise but temporary and understandable account of the present range of steroid hormones, their precursors, and their metabolites, and a critical evaluation of methods to estimate them. A plea is made for the wider use of the systematic names for the adrenal steroids rather than the alphabetical designations so commonly used today. As Reichstein remarks, there are innumerable Compounds E in science. Moreover, different letters are used to describe the same compounds, for example Kendall’s Compound E is Wintersteiner’s Compound F and Reichstein’s Compound Fa. Confusion can only result from the perpetuation of this unnecessarily ambiguous terminology.