

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.

H. Baker  
*The London Hospital,  
London E1 1BB.*

**Copeman's Textbook of the Rheumatic Diseases**, 2 vols. Sixth edition, edited by J.T. Scott. Pp. xxx + 1655, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £150.00.

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 Shober for Schober 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.

E.M. Paice  
*Whittington Hospital,  
London N19 5NF.*

**Epidemiology of Hypertension**, edited by C.J. Bulpitt. Handbook of Hypertension, Vol. 6. Pp. xvii + 518, illustrated. Elsevier, Amsterdam, New York, Oxford, 1985. Dfl 295.00, US \$109.25.

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.

B.I. Hoffbrand  
*Hypertension Clinic,  
Whittington Hospital,  
London N19*

**Food Allergy and Intolerance**, Jonathan Brostoff and Stephen J. Challacombe. Pp. xxiv + 1032, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, London, Philadelphia, Toronto, Mexico City, Sydney, Tokyo, Hong Kong, 1987. £75.00.

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