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For this edition we have three book reviews, on rheumatology, musculoskeletal examination and real-time ultrasound. I would like to thank each of the reviewers for their time and effort in reviewing these books. If any members are aware of new books which they would like to have reviewed, please let me know.

Evidence-Based Rheumatology.

Editors: Tugwell P, Shea B, Boers M, Brooks P, Lee S, Strand V & Wells G. BMJ Books. 2010. 582 pages. ISBN: 978-0-7279-1446-0

Reviewer: Dr. Norelee Kennedy, MISCOP, Lecturer, Physiotherapy Department, University of Limerick. norelee.kennedy@ul.ie

This book, published by BMJ books, is the latest in the Evidence-Based series. The book is edited by well known rheumatologists and is predominantly focused on medical management of rheumatological conditions. It does contain excellent chapters on how to search for evidence and explains the various sources of literature, how to write a good clinical question and how to undertake a comprehensive and appropriate literature search. These introductory chapters would be of use to anyone who is unfamiliar with literature searching or someone who would like an update on these skills. The rest of the book is divided into chapters on the commoner rheumatological and some musculoskeletal conditions. Conditions covered include gout, systemic lupus erythematosus, osteoarthritis, postmenopausal osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, shoulder and elbow pain, spondyloarthropathies, systemic sclerosis and primary systemic vasculitis. Each chapter presents a number of key clinical questions on each condition followed by a description of the systematic search of related keywords and subsequent review of evidence, with a synopsis of the literature presented for each question. The use of this format makes the chapters very readable in a short time and the inclusion of a short summary decision aid section at the end of each chapter adding to the practical application of the book. The book would serve as a useful reference guide to the current evidence based for people working in a variety of settings with people with rheumatological conditions. The addition of a CD-rom accompanying the book allows for more interaction with the books material and links to a website where additional updates and related resources for clinicians in addition to printable material for patients. As the book has a predominant focus on medical management it would not be an ideal first introduction to rheumatology for physiotherapists looking for detailed evidence on the physiotherapy management of rheumatological conditions. However, the book is an excellent reference source for up to date evidence for the management of many rheumatological conditions.

Guidelines and Gamuts in Musculoskeletal Ultrasound.

Editors: RK Chhem & E Cardinal. Wiley, New York. 1999. 408 pages. ISBN: 978-0-471-19755-3.

Reviewer: Karen McCreesh, MISCOP, Lecturer, Physiotherapy Department, University of Limerick. karen.mccreesh@ul.ie

The use of ultrasound for diagnostic purposes in musculoskeletal medicine has been steadily gaining in popularity in recent years with increasing evidence for its validity and reliability and its relative low cost and ease of use compared to other imaging modalities. Previously the preserve of radiologists only, now it is being used by physicians in emergency care, rheumatology and orthopaedics for rapid diagnosis and guided delivery of injections. In physiotherapy its use has been focused on rehabilitative rather than diagnostic purposes. However, skills in diagnostic ultrasound are being developed as part of extended scope practice in the UK, and we at UL are using ultrasound as an adjunct to the teaching of normal human anatomy, therefore the understanding of sonographic anatomy is of increasing relevance to the profession.

This book provides a practical guide to scanning of peripheral musculoskeletal structures aimed at practicing sonographers. The early chapters are arranged by joints (i.e. shoulder, knee) and provide, firstly, an overview of the relevant sonographic anatomy, followed by detailed technical guidelines on scanning the area, and finally a focus on common pathological findings and 'gamuts' (differential diagnoses). In addition, specific chapters on imaging of muscle, fascia and bone provide in-depth information about the scanning of these tissues. It is well written and structured throughout, with contributions from leading experts in the field. The Appendix provides an excellent and invaluable synopsis of the ultrasound-oriented anatomy of the peripheral joints, using tables and accompanying labeled cross-sectional diagrams.

The major weakness of this text, I believe, is the relatively poor quality of the gray-scale ultrasound images provided – which makes image interpretation quite challenging. The development of ultrasound technology in recent years means that much better quality images are available and are easily transferred by electronic means, which is where newer texts would have a great advantage over this one. It would also be helpful to have an image displaying the appropriate probe position for the basic scanning protocols. This text does not cover Doppler imaging which has become important aspect of imaging of tendon pathology, nor does it deal with scanning of the spinal musculoskeletal structures.

This book would be of value to a physiotherapist who is wishing, with appropriate supervision, to learn to perform and interpret musculoskeletal ultrasound imaging, however I believe the newer texts and those focused on rehabilitative imaging would be of more value to most physiotherapists.

Musculoskeletal Examination.

Authors: Jeffrey Gross, Joseph Fetto, Elaine Rosen, 3rd Edition, Wiley-Blackwell

Reviewer: Caoimhe Harrington, Physiotherapy Clinical tutor, Mercy University Hospital, Cork

For those of you looking to get back to the basics of musculoskeletal examination, this user friendly text might be the one for you. It is the combined work of a Physiatrist (Rehab Physician), Physical Therapist and Orthopaedist, all based in New York City and this, the 3rd edition, was published in 2009.

The authors state that “accurate physical examination demands a thorough knowledge and familiarity with anatomy and function” and the book reflects this belief. It is well organised into 14 chapters. Chapter 1 covers the components of the musculoskeletal system e.g. muscle/ ligament/ bone and highlights the link between a thorough physical examination and the establishment of an accurate diagnosis. Chapter 2 is designated solely to a review of the components of the subjective and objective examination.

Chapters 3 – 13 cover the regional anatomical sections, starting with spine and pelvis, progressing onto upper and lower extremities, and have similar structures to each other. Each begins with a brief and basic anatomical review of the region, followed by a region specific review of the subjective exam, then an easy to follow outline of the components of the objective exam e.g. observation, active movement testing, passive movement testing etc. Diagrams illustrating components of the objective exam such as palpation techniques, special tests and location of common trigger points highlight to good effect the key concepts being discussed. Tables and boxed details are frequent throughout the book and provide clinically relevant information in a concise format. “Normal” Xrays and MRI scans are also included in most chapters. The final chapter (14) describes the examination of gait.

Although the components of musculoskeletal examination are well outlined throughout, a greater element of evidence base could have been included, specifically in the “special tests” section where an insight into their validity, reliability, specificity and sensitivity would be very useful. Some terminology used in the book e.g. “Femoral Nerve Stretch Test” is not in line with current terminology used in Irish physiotherapy practice (Femoral Nerve Tension Test). Furthermore, the book would benefit from a chapter designated to detecting sinister pathologies (Red Flags), and biopsychosocial elements (Yellow Flags), to reinforce the importance of screening these within the musculoskeletal examination.

Overall this book is well laid out and readable. I see it as a useful guide for a student or novice practitioner who wants to improve the structure, sequence, handling and interpretation of musculoskeletal examination.