Book Reviews

Sex, Gender, and Pain

Roger B. Fillingim (Ed.). IASP Press, 2000. 393 pages. \$79.00 (US) Member Price \$55.00 (US)
ISBN 0- 931092-35-3

This multi-authored book is the 17th in the series "Progress in Pain Research and Management", published by IASP Press. The title will stimulate interest but the clinician will be disappointed since no clear guidelines emerge which would lead to any major change in practice. The topic is important because real differences should influence allocation of funds, training of personal and specific therapeutic strategies. For instance, a history of childhood sexual abuse is frequently found in patients with pelvic pain and that investigation and treatment of such complaints must include attention to this factor. This is only touched upon tangentially in this book.

The book is filled out with a lot of a basic research, much of it on animals. These are valuable sources for those researching in this field but are not very helpful to the clinician. The section devoted to clinical pain focuses on headache, fibromyalgia, temporomandibular disorders and irritable bowel syndrome, no doubt because of their high frequency in women. Absence of more mainstream pain conditions such as low back pain, postherpetic neuralgia and the many neuropathies seriously weakens this section and makes one wonder if differences related to gender have even been found in these conditions.

The best chapters in this book are the preface and first chapter by the editor and the chapter entitled "Conclusions". All clinicians working in the treatment of chronic pain to read them.

Richard Catchlove MBBS FFARACS MSC
Montreal, Quebec