Letter to the Editors,

Dear Editors,

I read with interest the recent review of the Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Sports Medicine written by Tver and Hunt, published by Chapman and Hall. Obviously one man's dictionary is another's anathema. Described as a state of the art, easy to use, up-to-date and accurate reference, I found it pedantic, pompous and boring, apart from being contradictory, out of date and inaccurate.

A few sample quotations:

For an athlete acne can be a seriously disabling problem since he (sic) may actually become disabled from secondary infection.

Crepitus. The noise of gas discharged from the intestines. This is in fact correct but hardly the definition likely to be of value in sports medicine, other than as a comment on the book.

The punch drunk syndrome has been observed most often in fighters of the sluggish type, who are usually poor boxers and take considerable punishment in seeking a knockout blow. Pace Mohammed Ali.

Charlie Horse. A term used to describe the muscle haematoma. True, but later used also to describe fibromyalgia.

The greater incidence of stress fracture in female athletes represents a lack of conditioning and proper training techniques, rather than a true disposition to injury.

As far as meniscal tears are concerned, the lateral meniscus is the only one considered worthy of mention, the cause being hyperflexion (?) of the knee as in the duck waddle type exercise.

Other solecisms abound. Why translate larynx into the popular voice box but go straight on to talk about trachea and bronchi? How long have beta blockers been ergogenic aids? I thought they were the reverse. But there is a limit to anyone's patience. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing and this book gives every impression of being written by an industrial medical officer who has hastily dashed through a few sports medicine text books and jotted down half-remembered quotations. One can only hope that his colleague does not actually teach in his physical education department. If he does, God help his women athletes!

Yours faithfully,

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