book reviews


The availability of comprehensive texts on body composition analysis is limited, so this publication is timely. it contains concise and informative reviews on the underlying concepts of most body composition assessment procedures as well as synopses of the mediating effects of age, sex, heredity, ethnicity, hormones, training, and diet. the final chapter, which could well have been the first, eloquently discusses the significance of body composition in the context of morbidity and mortality. for anyone who wishes to purchase equipment, there is also a very useful list of suppliers of each of the diverse techniques.

there are one or two criticisms however. the text is replete with various prediction equations for most methods of analysis, with the surprising exception of those based on skinfold sites! this is a critical omission, particularly as the skinfold method is one of the most widely accessible and universally applied procedures. the chapter on statistical methods for developing and testing prediction equations is very useful, although some reference to the bland and altman (lancet 1986) “levels of agreement” procedure deserves mention. there is also no reference to the infrared interactance technique. although this method has many critics (me included), it is nevertheless a technique that has been reported in the literature so a discussion of its merits or problems would be appropriate.

abbreviations are used with enthusiasm throughout. however, the small gain in space at the cost of intelligibility is sometimes confusing and annoying. for example, one sentence reads: “while the differences between measures from Ct and from MRI are generally low for SAT, the CV for VAT is higher...” oh! dear! you’ll have to read the book to see what it all means! in fact, even with these criticisms, i recommend that you do read the book (start saving now because it is not cheap!).

Roger eston
Bangor, Wales

exerc ise induced leg pain: chronic compartment syndrome. is the increase in intra-compartment pressure exercise specific? editor.—we thank Simon Kemp and Mark Ball for their comments about our paper.1 Kemp and Ball make several comments about the case history which we welcome as a general debate on the subject of exercise induced leg pain. by their own admission they accept that a major difference exists between investigators.

disappointingly they fail to enter into the debate on the main issue of the paper—that is, the increase in intra-compartment pressure exercise specific? the case history presented was our second observation, the first one being on a rower. since then, we have seen a further two cases in contemporary ballet dancers, a poster presented at ISAKOS conference in Argentina. a further collaborative case history of an underwater hockey player was presented at the American college of sports medicine conference.2

we now have enough case histories based on observation to justify a controlled experiment and a study to investigate this effect in more detail. Watch this space.

n padhiar
Hon consultant & research podiatrist
The Royal London Hospital
Bancroft Road
London E1 4DG

John B King
Consultant orthopaedic surgeon
Director, academic department of sports medicine
The Royal London Hospital
Bancroft Road
London E1 4DG