

Preface

It is now 28 years since the publication of the first edition of this book in 1983, and updated second and third editions appeared in 1989 and 1999 respectively. It seemed appropriate to once again re-visit this expanding and fascinating area, as urged by the late Professor Eric Bywaters in his foreword to the third edition. We are most grateful to Professor Anne de Paepe for gracing this fourth edition with a new foreword.

The format is similar to that of previous monographs with the chapters on assessment, biomechanics and hypermobility in the performing arts and sports all updated. The introduction, the chapters on the molecular basis of hypermobility, illustrative case histories and the heritable hypermobility syndromes have been completely re-written. The clinical chapters have also been re-written, with specific division between articular and extra-articular features. With the expectation that this edition will be the last from our own pens, the innovative Chap. 10 speculates on future avenues for research that might provoke ideas and provide content for a future edition, probably with different editors, a decade hence.

The last 10 years have seen significant advances in nosology of heritable hypermobility syndromes and, in particular, in our understanding of the molecular basis of these conditions. The latter informs on the possible pathogenesis of more heterogeneous hypermobility syndromes in the context of our increasing realisation that joints act as a surrogate for clinical features associated with joint hypermobility in other parts of the body.

Translational research in the field of hypermobility may lead to real advances in this interesting group of conditions, perhaps paving the way for medical management through manipulation of cytokines connected with growth and eventually even with genetic engineering.

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