

Preface

The use of musculoskeletal ultrasonography in rheumatology clinical practice has expanded swiftly over the past decade as an outcome of the technological developments and implementation of the window of opportunity concept in most of the inflammatory musculoskeletal conditions. Ultrasound booked its place as the “rheumatologist’s stethoscope” as it enabled the treating health care professional to diagnose, prognosticate, monitor disease activity as well as response to management. In contrast with other imaging modalities such as X-ray and magnetic resonance, ultrasound has clear advantages, namely good tolerability, no radioactivity, ability to scan both joints and soft tissue at one sitting and its dynamic facility, which enables direct correlation between clinical and imaging outcomes. In spite of some concerns regarding standardization, the use of ultrasound in rheumatology is expected to grow further as prices of the machine fall and the opportunity to practice improves. This book will go beyond the traditional specific joint ultrasonography, which has already been discussed thoroughly in previous publications, to focus on ultrasonographic changes in different musculoskeletal disorders. The main purpose of this book is to serve as a guide for any physician who wishes to perform clinical musculoskeletal ultrasound regardless of experience. The aim is provide a practical approach to dealing with patients suffering from different rheumatic diseases in standard practice. It is therefore suitable to a wide range of audience from the novice embarking on providing a musculoskeletal ultrasonography service, to the experienced who wishes to develop their sonographic scanning skills.

The main theme of this book is to deliver a very practical and reader-friendly guide. On one hand it describes a “how to do it” approach, whereas in the meantime it delivers the evidence and advanced knowledge base of the relevant pathological sonographic appearances of the various musculoskeletal tissues. The illustrations and figures were meticulously selected to give the reader a clear guide towards implementation in real life practice. Focusing on the major values of ultrasound in rheumatologic diseases, this book with its 14 chapters is expected to fill an important void in the current literature. It represents what can be considered to be the best current thinking on role of ultrasonography in the assessment of pathology, diagnosis, and treatment of different rheumatic diseases. Therefore, this book can serve as both excellent introductory and a very good reference resource for future reading.

This work has been the outcome of cooperative effort of a large international group of leaders in musculoskeletal ultrasonography. They have done a superb job to produce authoritative chapters including vast amounts of scientific and clinical data to create state-of-the-art descriptions of sonographic changes encompassed by different rheumatic diseases. Special thanks to Dr. Chris Deighton who wrote the book's foreword and Dr. Adham Khalil for his support throughout the whole project which helped to make this book complete.

Personally, I feel privileged to have compiled this work and am enthusiastic about all that it offers our readers. I hope you too will find this edition a uniquely valuable educational resource.

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