ing this condition, at the present moment, insertion of the valve is the test. In the UK economy where surgeons are so hard pressed this may be a preferable means of determining likely treatment for patients with large ventricles than using CSF conductance to outflow studies, a test where the name of Eckstedt deserves a mention.

In conclusion the initial doubts felt about a textbook of this kind have largely been resolved in this reviewer's mind. It seems a sensibly discussed and unextreme statement of modern US practice in the surgical treatment of this fascinating and unremittingly difficult disorder.

BERNARD WILLIAMS

Neonatal Neurology. 3rd Edition. By GERALD M FENICHEL. (Pp 261; Price: £29.95). Edinburgh, Churchill Livingstone, 1990. ISBN 0-443-08700-8

During the last two decades, there has been a very great increase in interest in neonatal neurology. This sprang partly from the fact that clinical symptoms and signs could be correlated now with conditions identified by the newer methods of imaging which in the past were mainly possible on post-mortem examination. Better intensive care also allowed many ill infants, both premature and those with rarer neurological syndromes to survive and pose their problems to the clinicians. Greater interest in the subject no doubt has also been fuelled by the increasing litigation in infants who present with neurological problems in the newborn period, as later problems of many of these infants are commonly attributed to the associated signs of perinatal asphyxia and thus assumed malpractice.

Dr Fenichel's book was one of the first which tried to fill the gap in this field. The book, now in its 3rd edition, primarily aims to be a readable guide for clinicians and thus to concentrate on the clinical aspects of diagnosis and management with a minimum of pathological background. The first chapter describes the neurological consultation. The following chapters deal with: seizures, disorders of tone, asphyxia, trauma and vascular disorders, infectious diseases, metabolic disorders, disorders of cerebral morphogenesis, hydrocephalus and congenital tumours, electro-encephalography and evoked responses.

The neurological consultation gives a good practical approach to history taking, clinical examination and note taking. Probably more emphasis could be given to the importance of asking leading questions about trauma in pregnancy and recording, with the appropriate family tree, recurrent miscarriages, and still-births and neonatal death in the parents' relatives. Abnormal postures in neonates are illustrated with diagrams. Though visual representation is always the best method, I wish that these diagrams would bear more resemblance to a neonate and his posture! The chapter on seizures provides an extremely good practical approach to their treatment avoiding polypharmacy and unnecessarily long periods of therapy. The chapter on hypotonia reflects the author's special interest in muscle disease and thus quite a lot of space is devoted to pathological illustrations and rare conditions.

This contrasts with the chapter on asphyxia which is relatively brief, taking into account that it is probably by far the most common condition that the average clinician is going to meet. There is also little information in this chapter to guide the clinician as to how various investigations might establish the timing of the insult which might be of medico-legal importance. I found the separation of the chapter on asphyxia away from birth trauma arbitrary and artificial. The chapters on infectious diseases and metabolic disorders are excellent. The embryology and pathology in the disorders of cerebral morphogenesis and hydrocephalus are good and easily readable, though maybe too extensive for a book of this size. The chapter on electrophysiology is very informative. It is only a pity that no similar brief chapter was included on imaging.

This is a lucidly written book, though the clinician might have been greatly helped if some flow diagrams had been supplied to aid the differential diagnosis. It provides a readable and enjoyable introduction to the subject.

LILLY DUBOWITZ

Textbook of Psychiatry. Study Guide and Self-Assessment. By MR LOVELL, MD FRANZEN. (Pp 398; Price £14.95 Paperback). Cambridge University Press, 1989. ISBN 0-88048-293-1.

MCQ books are eagerly consumed by anxious pre-membership trainees in most medical disciplines. After negotiating the exam, successful candidates frequently attempt to put their hard work to practical use by publishing their own collection of questions. In psychiatry, some candidates have even passed on their wisdom in this form before completing the postgraduate exams. Until now, it has been a seller's market, and consequently many of these books are of a poor standard, riddled with errors or poor quality questions and often poor value for money. The developing glut of such books will hopefully mean that in future only better quality books will be published.

This book is compiled as a study guide to *The American Press Textbook of Psychiatry*, and consists of between 15 and 20 MCQs drawn from each chapter. The authors go about their task competently, providing a comprehensive, but rather unimaginative selection of MCQs with brief explanations accompanying answers. However, the book is unlikely to meet the needs of most buyers in the UK. The original textbook is of high quality, but is not in common use among British psychiatrists. The content is heavily biased towards American psychiatric practice, with an emphasis on DSM-III, and absence of reference to British mental health legislation. Most trainees buy this type of book to prepare for examinations, but the format of questions is unlike that in Royal College Examinations, and so is likely to arouse limited interest.

THOMAS FAHY

Neurology: What Shall I Do? By D THOMAS AND B DAILY. (Pp 115; Price £6.95). Sevenoaks, Butterworth Scientific Ltd, 1989.

This short book written for general practitioners consists of 100 questions posed by a GP and answered by the consultant. The questions usually consist of a potted case

history and are wide ranging covering an impressive range of topics. I would have no doubt that GP's will enjoy and learn a lot from this book whose format makes it extremely easy to read. Hopefully with the White paper looming they will still feel a neurological opinion is necessary. I suspect Daffyd Thomas has done us all a great favour in helping to popularise and remove some of the mythology of neurology as a difficult subject. He has also helped to show GP's what sort of patients neurologists are interested in, can help with and most importantly with what degree of urgency. There is even talk of using the telephone rather than sending everything in on the general take—the battle to get acutely ill patients with neurological problems to the neurologist must not falter. There is a refreshing honesty about some of the answers suggesting that he actually does what he says which makes for interesting reading for other neurologists. Naturally, controversial topics are discussed, though a GP reading this book will not always be made aware of them. For instance, there is a rather evangelical attitude towards the management and investigation of vascular disease. Should sell well and for the neurologist is very amusing in places.

ADRIAN WILLIAMS

The Pediatric Neurosurgical Patient: A Cooperative Approach. Edited by L P IVAN. (Pp 323; Price £38.75). Published by Warren H Green (USA). Distributed by Gazelle Book Services (Lancaster), 1989. ISBN 0-87527-352-1

There is a need for a concise and readable text book which can provide non-medical staff with a balanced introduction to the complexity, scope and achievements of modern paediatric surgery. Dr Leslie Ivan has attempted to fill this need, drawing on the experience of the staff of the Childrens Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

It is ironic that the book, whose title stresses a co-operative approach, suffers the problems of repetition and disparate content common to so many multi-author texts. Thus, the chapters vary from an excellent but rather advanced explanation of audiological testing to a discussion of speech therapy dominated by its own jargon—"the dyspraxic patient demonstrates inconsistent errors as he gropes towards target phonemes when he undertakes volitional speech movements". No small text book can escape oversimplification but there are several occasions when the authors of this book adopt a worryingly didactic approach, for example to the use of high dose steroids, barbiturates and hyperventilation in the management of raised intracranial pressure and head injury.

There are some omissions from the book which are surprising. The emphasis is very much on the role of professional hospital based health workers and it was therefore, disappointing to find no critical appraisal of their work. There is only brief mention of the role of parents, community services and self-help groups and no mention of the importance of clinical genetics and counselling. It is surprising to find that magnetic resonance imaging is dealt with in a one page addendum, despite publication in 1989.

Although this book contains much commonsense, it would be difficult to recommend it, at its present cost—£38.75—to those for whom it was intended.

RJ NELSON