Groove Meningiomas are dealt with in two brief paragraphs while Tuberculum Sellae Meningiomas occupy a page and Petroclival Meningiomas likewise a page. In a book claiming to address the principles of neurosurgery, descriptions which fall between excessive brevity and over-detailed attempts lead inevitably to the feeling that one is driven to the usually quite extensive reference lists for further information. The chapter on Trigeminal and Glossopharyngeal neuralgias and Hemifacial Spasm on the other hand addresses the subject briskly and yet comprehensively.

Some of the recommendations in the chapter on Management of Head Injury would, I think, raise eyebrows even in the most dedicated neurosurgical units in the United Kingdom but it is clear that the Monitoring of Intracranial Pressure is retained more in fashion across the Atlantic than here. By the same token, the detailed description of Ventriculography, a procedure which is hardly ever performed now, particularly in the context of head injuries, is quite surprising. Other chapters address Spinal Cord Tumours, Vascular Malformations, Syringomyelia and Neural Tube Defects and while brief are reasonably comprehensive and pleasant to read. The book finishes with brief chapters on Traumatic Lesions of the Spine and Spinal Cord and on Peripheral Nerve Disorders and, again reflecting its American origin, two of the best chapters are by Watts and his associates on Disc Disease and Spinal Canal Stenosis.

The reviewer found it difficult to know quite what to make of this book. It does not set out to be a compendious review of neurosurgery and yet the chapter on CNS Infection, includes 431 references. It might profitably form bedside reading for a junior neurosurgical resident but it is likely that its main interest would be the remarkable series of references appended to most of the chapters. In the presence of so many more clearly focussed texts I wonder whether it will be bought by more than a handful of fairly rich trainees.

LINDSAY SYMON

Advances in Neurosurgery Vol 19. Edited by W J BOCK, CH LUMENTA, M BROCK AND M KLINGER. (Pp 283; Price: DM88.00.) 1991. Heidelberg, Springer-Verlag. ISBN 3 540 53311 7.

This issue of advances in Neurosurgery is described as dealing with three major topics. The first is concerned with vascular malformations of the brain where Neuroradiological interventions and microneurosurgical treatment present major advances. The second covers treatment patterns for various supratentorial tumours in childhood. The interdisciplinary aspects of neurosurgical intensive care, particularly electrophysiology and anaesthesia, are treated extensively as the third topic. The book is made up of papers from the Proceedings of the 41st Annual Meeting of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Neurochirurgie, Düsseldorf, May 27–30, 1990.

Unfortunately two other sections have been added. The first deals with the co-ordination of Neurosurgical training in Europe of the 1990's and the second consists of the winning poster presentations at the proceed-

ings. Neither of these two added sections fit into the described format of the book and the section on training has no place in this type of presentation.

The remaining sections I found to be disappointing. Each section consists of a disparate collection of papers varying in quality, originality and scientific context. The sections on vascular malformations of the brain and supratentorial tumours in children will provide a discerning reader with some information of modern approaches and treatments for a variety of pathological entities. The section on Neurosurgical Intensive Care I found to be unclear and it failed to convey the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in this area. I would not recommend this volume to young Neurosurgeons in training, though some of the papers may be of interest to Researchers.

NEIL DWYER

Information in the Brain: A Molecular Perspective. By IRA B BLACK. (Pp 225; Price: £26.95.) 1991. London, The MIT Press. ISBN 0 262 02321 0.

Ira Black is a major contributor to modern neurobiology. His book contains a very intelligent and readable core which summarises a 1990 view of the chemistry of neural function. He moves from the signalling of rapid events by way of evanescent transmitters to the intracellular consequences which have longer and longer time epochs. He describes with great clarity the interaction of these imposed changes with the inherent genetic make up of the cells. He shows precisely how these transient changes may produce longer and longer term events within single cells and outside them. The roles of transmitters, intracellular messengers, enzymes, nuclear potentialities, peptides and growth factors are displayed with admirable clarity.

This core is submerged in a more speculative surround in which it is proposed that the properties of the molecules determine the potentiality of the organism and that the behavioural repertoire of the organism depends on its possession of specific molecules. This provocative suggestion leads to much more specific hypotheses such as the proposal that Alzheimer's disease is basically an error in the handling of nerve growth factor which prevents the proper function of cholinergic basal neurons. I hope he is right in his guess. Even beyond this surround, the book contains an attack on "Functionalist Fallacy and Muddled Metaphor". I find his solution as unsatisfactory as the target of his attack but that does not detract from the value of his core summary.

PATRICK D WALL

Nerve Endings and Mitochondria Missing Links. By DAVID HOPKINS. (Pp 182; Price £12.00.) 1991. London, Neuropress. ISBN 0 9515290 0 5.

The title of this book is an unusual juxtaposition of words and intriguing which is why I agreed to review it. It is presented, I hesitate to say written, in a curiously disjointed style of numerous short paragraphs with a note-

like use of words. It is easy to read with limited and highly selected references to the literature.

The underlying hypothesis is presented in chapter 4 and is essentially that vesicles containing neurotransmitters localised in the nerve ending originate on the nerve ending mitochondria by a process which is not clear. The evidence put forward for this suggestion is largely morphological and of a very speculative kind. Molecular mechanisms as to the manner by which phospholipids and cholesterol are incorporated into the vesicle membranes from the mitochondria are conspicuous by their simplicity and vagueness. Indeed in chapter 15 one of the proposals may be interpreted as meaning that the coupling of mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation changes on nerve stimulation. Furthermore in chapter 16 (sec.16.1.2) the F_0 fraction of the mitochondrial ATP synthase is described as *mostly* of intramembrane subunits of mitochondrial genetic origin. In fact only two of the seven known components are coded for by the mitochondrial genome.

It is these types of suggestion and inaccuracies, together with the highly selected references quoted which lead one to view the speculative hypothesis propounded in this book with some scepticism if not incredulity. Whilst I found the book interesting to read, I could not on balance recommend any serious reader to purchase a copy, despite its relatively low price (£12.00).

J B CLARK

SHORT NOTICES

Revue Neurologique

Published by Masson, Paris. Abstracts of Articles for 1990 and 1991 available in English as a supplement.

Basic Histopathology: A Colour Atlas & Text. 2nd Edition. By PR WHEATER, HG BURKITT, A STEVENS, JS LOWE. (Pp 252 Illustrated; Price Not Indicated) 1991. Edinburgh, Churchill Livingstone. ISBN 0 443 04237 3.

World Health Forum: An International Journal of Health Development Vol. 12, No.3. (Pp 374; Annual subscription Sw.fr 68.-/US\$54.-) 1991. Geneva, World Health Organisation. IX ISSN 0251 2432.