The book runs to over 700 pages and contains no less than 46 chapters. Whilst much of the volume is taken up with frontal lobe epilepsy, there are also contributions to the cytoarchitecture and neurophysiology of the frontal lobes in both man and primates. There are discussions into aspects of neurotransmitters like dopamine in frontal lobe projections from the basal ganglia and of the pharmacological management of the partial epilepsies. One can criticise the repetitious nature of many of the discussions. It will certainly serve as a state of the art review for anyone with anything more than a passing interest in epilepsy.

DAVID CHADWICK


“Pain is one of the prime movers of life” declared François Magendie. Doctors have advanced from this merciless standpoint, but not enough to satisfy the authors of this decidedly mixed volume.

On the one hand, here are definitive accounts of pain-generating mechanisms (though contentious areas, like that of the cerebral cortex, are avoided) and commonsensical, compassionate descriptions of pain management. But alongside such sound contributions there are ill-conceived and hastily written chapters. Even allowing for constitutional difficulties with minding ones mus, deltas and kappas, getting through a section on opioid pharmacology felt like walking through quick-setting cement, not least because of spectacular typos, eg “dele-ritous” (page 699).

Neurological purists likewise will balk at suggestions that trigeminal neuralgia may be caused by intracerebral (sic) tumours (page 650), that anti-serotonin agents may be classified as adrenergic blockers (page 772), and that diphenylhydantoin and phenytoin are somehow different (page 771).

The most irritating feature of the book is its inclination to accuse the medical profession en bloc of not advancing from the Magnide line. “Doctors fail because of ignorance, inexperience...” (page 567), “doctors often become frustrated or even angry...” (page 763). Such pejorative and condescending remarks mirror the very opinions these doctors are supposed to have towards their patients. They are unsubstantiated and, even if true, two wrongs do not make a right. The presence of such comments, along with a tendency to sloganizing and attempts at fundraising, strike a note of desperation (in a purportedly scientific test) which must ultimately be counterproductive.

These flaws make it hard to recommend the book to neurologists who will already have access to classic textbooks on pain. Similarly, trainees may find the price a little steep for under 300 pages of plainly produced text with few illustrations.

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*J Neural Neurosurg Psychiatry* 1993 56: 116
doi: 10.1136/jnnp.56.1.116-a

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