detailed pathogenesis of neuropathies came when the drug was withdrawn from general use. In this short monograph the author has gathered together the extensive literature about the clinical features of the predominantly sensory neuropathy. The discussion on pathogenesis and histopathology is an abstract of opinions expressed by various authors, but does not add new material or reach satisfactory conclusions. Most workers postulate an enzyme block or competitive inhibition of a B-group vitamin, but final proof is absent. Even the question whether the lesion is a primary neuronal degeneration or segmental demyelination is undecided. Toxicologists still studying thalidomide with newer methods will find this a useful summary of the literature, but it is now of only historical interest to clinicians.

J. A. SIMPSON


This excellent issue of the British Medical Bulletin has been admirably planned by a committee headed by Dr. W. M. Court-Brown. The 16 papers included are by 19 leading geneticists, clinical and population cytogenetists, biochemical geneticists, and specialists in the genetic aspects of blood-groups, haemoglobin, common malformations and common disorders, as well as thalassaemia, porphyria, and homocystinuria. An enormous amount of important information and comment is presented and will be widely welcomed and referred to.


This Conference brought together in November 1965 many leaders of current thought concerning the physiology of speech and language. For neurologists it will suffice to mention, as contributors, names such as Hécaen, Rosadini, Brenda Milner, Teuber, Sperry, Geschwind, Ettlinger, Magoun, Benton, and Masland, for the high quality and interest of this volume to be appreciated.


This is a useful volume for nurses to study and will be found in most neurological wards. Figures 24, 25, and 26 are very indistinct. Figure 12 is out of date, for foam packs are available to form the 'bales' and of course are much better. This figure should also show support for the patient's head.


The second volume in this series deals with aspects of intracranial tumours, largely of the glioma group. There are chapters on the pathology and classification of gliomas, tissue culture of gliomas, nervous system tumours in animals, chemical composition of brain tumours, immunological aspects and radiotherapy of tumours, and a comparison of air studies, angiography, and isotope scans in diagnosis. The editors state that they had asked contributors to produce a critical summary of world literature on their subject and to leaven this with their own experience and that derived from contacts with other workers. Some contributors have satisfied this brief, but others have used their space to put forward their own individual views at length. In the chapter on pathology and classification of gliomas by Zulch and Weschler, most of the space is devoted to a statement of their particular views on this subject, often with detailed consideration of histology which might be tedious to the neurosurgeon. Some of the views put forward by these authors are not widely accepted by other neuropathologists and this disagreement is not made sufficiently clear in the text.

The chapter on tissue culture in gliomas by Kersting makes fascinating reading and is also a model of clear, concise, and elegant writing. He has used the classification put forward by Zulch and it is interesting to note that his work largely supports this system of classifying gliomas.

Chapters on chemical composition and metabolism in brain tumours (P. E. Maspes and P. Paoletti) and on immunology (L. C. Scheinberg and J. M. Taylor) do provide a critical review of these subjects without the interposition of very personal ideas. Both these subjects seem to be in an early formative state and provide much of interest but little of immediate practical value to the surgeon.

The chapter on radiotherapy is also an objective review of the present views on this form of therapy and provides little that is new to the experienced clinician. The same may be said of the chapter comparing the value of air studies, angiography, and isotope scans in the diagnosis of gliomas. This is dealt with in some detail and gliomas in various situations described separately. It is done very well and the information about various isotopes is valuable. The conclusions are those reached by most neurosurgeons from experience and add little to the sum total of knowledge.

There is an interesting chapter on nervous system tumours in animals; most of the known tumours in man also occur in animals, though there are species differences and many tumours which cannot be easily classified in human terms.

This book provides useful and modern views on the pathology of nervous system tumours and will be a valuable reference work for some years to come. The illustrations, which are numerous, are all excellent and the bibliographies after each chapter both voluminous and comprehensive. The outstanding chapter, both in content and style, is that on tissue culture and this at least should be read by all neurosurgeons and neuropathologists.

BRODIE HUGHES
Book reviews

Brodie Hughes

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