Breuer reflex to be unimportant in man except possibly in exercise, while in pathological states impulses from epithelial irritant receptors in the intrapulmonary airways and from juxta-pulmonary capillary receptors may dominate in producing abnormal respiratory patterns. Investigations into the central control of breathing, facilitated by microelectrode recording of activity in individual neurones, reveal that, in addition to neurones firing with inspiration or expiration, there are neurones whose firing is more related to the change of respiratory phase and these may be significant in determining respiratory rhythm. The studies on normal and abnormal respiratory sensation stress that this results from the interaction of several afferent inputs of which the vagus is one, others including afferents from the chest wall and, of apparently greater importance, afferents in the phrenic nerve. This interaction is emphasized by the finding that vagotomy benefits only a proportion of dyspnoic patients.

Thus both basic research workers and clinicians will find much of interest in this book. Moreover, each should gain greatly from the insight it affords into the ideas of those who approach the problem of breathing from different viewpoints.

N. JOELS


In the last 20 years there has been an outstanding growth in knowledge about diseases of muscle. As the main flood of new descriptive work subsides, leaving the hard task of understanding, the time has come for the illustrative atlas and brief review. A number have come to our attention. This one, from the Laboratory for Neuropathology, Academic Hospital, Amsterdam, is by far the best. The illustrations, all in colour, are so well selected and beautifully reproduced that one has the immediate sensation of direct confrontation with the microscope. The 61 pages of text are a masterly condensation of the subject. The selected references are well chosen.

Colour printing is expensive but entirely justified in this small volume. The general pathologist or neurologist studying this book will rapidly learn the essentials of muscle pathology.

J. A. SIMPSON


This book of review essays should be considered against the background of the communications crisis in medicine, which is causing increasing concern. The pace of progress in medical technology has made it almost impossible to produce a comprehensive textbook that is not seriously out of date in parts by the time it is published. Formation of interdisciplinary teams leads to new work being dispersed more and more widely in specialist journals beyond the regular reading of any one clinical discipline. Conference proceedings abound, but they have not been refined by the editorial eye which acts as a watchdog for the journals which enjoy sufficient reputation to allow them to reject material below a certain standard, and to demand modification of what they do accept. In this context the review article is assuming increasing importance and this book consists of 13 such chapters ranging over a variety of topics.

That on cerebrovascular disease (by McCabe) is an outstanding contribution to one of the most controversial fields in contemporary neurosurgery and with its 150 references it should become a standard source for a few years. Head injuries, intracranial tumours and infections, and paediatric neurosurgery are competently reviewed in varying styles. The next few chapters deal with what some neurosurgeons might still regard as minority interests but they promise to claim more attention as neurosurgical services in general become less austere and papilloedema, coma, or subarachnoid haemorrhage are no longer the only respectable reasons for admission to a neurological unit. They deal with stereotaxis, surgery for pain, epilepsy, and for mental disease. The first chapter in the book deals with neuroradiology and is the least successful. It was probably a mistake to try to cover the field of neuroradiology in a chapter on its own, rather than in the context of the appropriate clinical problem. Moreover, this chapter includes too many brief and didactic statements which reflect personal views rather than current thinking in general. It is also dated in several of its comments.

There are limits to how much an editor can impose his wishes in a book of invited contributions. It might have been helpful to have indicated to authors how fully references were to be given (they vary from 5 to 150), and to insist on a uniform style (only some chapters give titles). Only an editor, too, might have pointed out how uninformative are whole brain sections in black and white as a means of conveying pathology—elsewhere in this book there are good examples of the value of line diagrams, which tend to be much more helpful.

BRYAN JENNETT


Early exploitation of the cathode ray oscillograph by Erlanger and Gasser laid the foundation to all our present knowledge of the electrophysiology of the peripheral nervous system. The 1922-1941 volumes of the American Journal of Physiology must among the most frequently consulted in the library of a neurophysiological department and all senior workers treasured the synoptic review provided by the Johnson Foundation for Medical Physics of the University of Pennsylvania in 1937. Though much has happened since then and some of the work has required amendment, the present generation is indebted to David P. C. Lloyd for making this landmark in neurophysiology available again. This second edition has complete bibliographies of the works of both Erlanger and Gasser.

J. A. SIMPSON

ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING OF DYSLEXIC CHILDREN

Lectures given at a training course organized by the ICAA Word Blind Centre for Dyslexic Children.
Book reviews

Edited by Alfred White Franklin and Sandhya Naidoo. (Pp. x + 124; £1.05.) Invalid Children's Aid Association: London.
The Word Blind Centre for Dyslexic Children has enjoyed considerable publicity since it was established in 1963. The newspapers blossomed with accounts of undiagnosed dyslexics and increasing pressure was brought upon neurologists, educationists, and psychologists to provide facilities for the assessment and training of dyslexic children. There was an inevitable reaction to this popular outcry and professional attitudes polarized into enthusiastic belief or scepticism. In spite of a lessening of emotional tensions, misunderstandings still occur.

In response to a request from teachers, a series of lectures on dyslexia was given by the staff of the Word Blind Centre in 1969, and they have been made available in this short book. The lectures cover the problems of diagnosis, assessment, and psychological testing, and then discuss in practical detail some of the methods of training these disabled children. It is now generally accepted that true dyslexia is a relatively uncommon condition. There are thus few remedial teachers who have a sufficiently wide experience to choose the most appropriate form of treatment for these children, who present with a range of difficulties and aptitudes. These lectures provide a lively account of current methods based on first-hand experience.

IVAN T. DRAPER

There are a number of books on paediatric neurology in this format: 450-500 pages; attractively produced, with excellent illustrations—and all expensive. Neurology of Early Childhood is an expanded version of Dr. Dekaban's Neurology of Infancy and now includes child development and disease occurring up to school age. Limitations according to age are largely artificial; the exclusion of the diseases of adolescence from the sphere of paediatrics means that the infrequent occurrence of such diseases in childhood goes largely unrecognized. An exception to this rule is Huntington's chorea, which gets a generous allowance in several paediatric texts.

Neurology of Early Childhood gives an excellent review of developmental anatomy and physiology and there is a well-presented account of the maturation of the electroencephalograph. The description of the neurological examination and its interpretation is brief and orthodox. However, this section exemplifies the problems of a medium-sized textbook. For the beginner it is insufficiently detailed to be instructive, and for the expert it is scarcely necessary.

Those chapters devoted to disease states contain particularly good descriptions of the clinical disorders. The methods for reaching the correct diagnosis are less satisfactory. Almost without exception, the diseases are classified according to the underlying pathology, and the clinical presentation is considered secondarily. Thus, a child will present with the symptoms or peripheral neuropathy, yet this clinical syndrome does not warrant a separate entry in the text. Reference to the index produces 'Polyneuropathy, lead' or 'Neuropathies, Hereditary, Charcot-Marie-Tooth type, and Dejerine-Sottas type'. For a description of the neuropathies of deficiency, metabolic disorders, toxic conditions, and so on, the student requires a knowledge of all the possible primary conditions before the appropriate entry can be found.

In an effort to avoid dogmatism some of the advice is irritatingly imprecise. When discussing the prolonged use of anticonvulsants for the treatment of febrile convulsions Dr. Dekaban states that 'the decision should be made on the merits of the individual patient'. While one agrees with this wholeheartedly, the inexperienced clinician is looking for assistance on this point. In the important chapter on epilepsy there is a valuable description of the variations in seizures at different stages of a child's development. There is little about the pathophysiology of epilepsy and the EEG records which illustrate this chapter are reproduced without any indication of the montages.

In spite of the occasional lapse when the child is referred to as 'the organism', this is a humane approach to neurology. The format is reminiscent of an old-fashioned museum, where rank upon rank of material is available although the user needs to know what he is looking for. It is a well-documented catalogue of the common and rare neurological conditions. As such, it is a useful aide-memoire, but it is of less practical value to the beginner in paediatric neurology.

IVAN T. DRAPER

Whenever a doctor prescribes a potent drug his patient runs a risk which was negligible when pharmaceuticals had little pharmacological action. The anxiety and responsibility is increased a thousandfold when the substance has rarely if ever been given to a human being. No trials on animals can entirely eliminate the possibility of a uniquely human response especially psychological or in the special senses and the nightmares of teratogenesis or carcinogenesis are ever present. And yet animal studies may deprive us of valuable drugs. Aspirin and pheno-barbitone might well have been excluded if subjected to modern screening.

This valuable number of the British Medical Bulletin, edited by Professor D. R. Laurence, presents the dilemma with unusual lucidity. The papers by well-known experts in clinical, epidemiological, and industrial pharmacology should be read carefully by all who take part in clinical trials. And every prescription of a new drug is a clinical trial.

J. A. SIMPSON

This little book, No. 3 of the Workshop Series of Phar-
ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING OF DYSELEXIC CHILDREN

Ivan T. Draper

J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry 1971 34: 205-206
doi: 10.1136/jnnp.34.2.205-c

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