perspective. I am glad to see mental handicap given some space, but surely some aspects of mental handicap deserve much more detailed coverage than this, particularly the fragile X syndrome. It is time biological, clinical and neuroscientists pay more attention to the neglected but scientifically enormously rich field of mental retardation.

Other topics covered in this volume include the oft-reviewed molecular genetics with relation to the major psychoses, tau protein phosphorylation in Alzheimer’s disease, cytoarchitectonic and developmental studies of schizophrenia brains, neurtrophins and neurodegenerative diseases, neuroendocrine testing, clinical and pathological aspects of HIV, and the applications of magnetic resonance spectroscopy in psychiatry.

I have enjoyed this book and yet I have reservations about the whole series in terms of its aims and targeted audience. However good they are, books such as this have serious limitations: in fast moving areas of science, reviews are out of date before the book comes off the press. An expert reader will know that a particular hard copy text has a very short shelf life, but the average psychiatrist, both trainee and trainer, will be misled by a cover note that promises comprehensive and up-to-date reviews. The latter readership will also find the technical language very hard going and will probably give up. Digestible information for non-experts needs another style, and I doubt that it is realistic to expect one format to double for experts and non-experts alike.

Active researchers, on the other hand, might refer to a volume like this for a key reference, but will really get their information from journals, the scientific grapevine and, where available, rapidly updated electronic online databases. The time has come for publishers who aim to serve the scientific community to follow the example of their authors by exploiting the new technologies and develop networked electronic publishing.

ELEANOR FELDMAN


With an ever ageing population, dementing illness continues to expand as a neurological subspecialty. Although treatable causes of dementia have long been recognised, drug treatments for major neurodegenerative illness such as Alzheimer’s disease are imminent. Thus classifying the type of dementia is no longer of merely academic interest, but is of clinical and therapeutic importance. This two-author American text aims to present a comprehensive account of the field.

The initial section is an overview of the dementias in general. There are good introductions to clinical medicine, neuropathology, neuropsychology, structural and functional imaging, and pathology in dementia research. The chapter on evaluating the demented patient will be of practical use to the neurologist. The bulk of the text addresses the various diseases which cause dementia. For most conditions, pathology, clinical features, investigation and treatment are addressed, as in the chapter on AIDS dementia. However, there is some variability in this approach; the hydrocephalus chapter addresses clinical issues, while the non-Alzheimer degenerative dementia chapter is largely neuropathological. The section on Alzheimer’s disease is disappointingly brief, shorter than that on dementia in Down syndrome for example. However, the chapters on extrapyramidal dementias, ischaemic vascular dementia and the infectious cerebral amyloidoses are particularly good, and the overall standard is very high.

Advice on management of the demented patient concludes the book. Behavioural problems are well covered, and there is a comprehensive account of potential pharmacological means of treating dementias, such as tacrine for Alzheimer’s disease. A final chapter on future developments concentrates on genetics, pathogenesis, diagnostic methods and pharmacotherapy.

The text is comprehensively referenced, with plentiful pathological illustrations. Basic science and clinical features are well blended, although a minor carp might be that clinical aspects are not covered quite as extensively as pathology. That aside, the neurologist or psychiatrist with an interest in dementia will find much of value in this book.

JOHN GREENE


Despite the development of rehabilitation medicine as a specialty in itself, much of the on-going care of neurological disability is provided by the neurologist, neurosurgeon or general medical colleagues. These providers of chronic long-term care are generally untrained in this discipline. They have little or no concept of such fundamentals as the measurement of disability, the proper usage of therapists, the behavioural and cognitive disturbances of chronic illness and the management of specific problems such as pain, bladder and sexual dysfunction. It is to these clinicians that this excellent and long overdue textbook is directed.

In the foreword and preface, it is stated that some two percent of the population are handicapped or disabled through neurological disease and that increasingly neurological specialists, whose traditional role is one of diagnosis and immediate management, are expected to advise and care for such persons. This book provides an outstanding reference text for such purposes. The editors have drawn about them a diverse, distinguished, multi-disciplinary group of contributors from throughout the United Kingdom. The text is divided into three sections. The first deals with the principles of neurological rehabilitation dealing with the epidemiology of disease, the organisation of rehabilitation services, social and ethical implications and mechanisms of restorative and adaptive recovery. The second section deals with the measurement and assessment of disability embracing not just physical but also cognitive and behav-

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