CORRECTION

Migraine
J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry 1996;60:338;1996;60:448. These two listed publications were inadvertently not attributed. They were written by Dr E M R Critchley, affiliation as given in the third in the series, this volume (1996;60:584).

BOOK REVIEWS

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£10 customers should add £2 per item for postage and packing. Payment can be made by cheque in sterling drawn on a United Kingdom bank, or by credit card (Mastercard, Visa). Express books may arrive within 24 hours: please specify number of copies, expiry date, and your full name.


"Inevitably the disease progresses, but one must never give in too quickly, neither the sufferer nor the helper, who must always be quick with encouragement since success breeds success" (p545). So writes the wife of a patient with motor neuron disease (MND) at the end of this book dedicated to his disease. A moving account that not only relays what the disease means at the personal level to both the patient and family but also serves as an encouragement to those involved in the research and management of this most feared of neurological diseases. This fear for many years reflected our ignorance, but MND is now currently yielding some of its secrets with the advent of modern molecular genetics and families of neurotrophic factors. This book therefore appears at an appropriate time.

This book primarily concentrates on the pathology, pathogenesis and treatment of MND, and covers the ground well, so what might repetitively at times—for example, inclusion body pathology is discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 7 at least! However, in a field that is currently moving at speed, the book can clearly be seen to be dated, irrespective of the obvious comments in the text (for example, p230 "Since this chapter was first submitted for publication in 1989, ... "). It is therefore not surprising that some topics are already in need of revision including: discussion of the SMA gene; the role of glial cell-line derived neurotrophic factor (GDNF) in motor neuron survival; the results of clinical trials using neurotrophic factors in MND; the significance of anti-GM1 antibodies in MND and motor neuropathies and the future of riluzole therapy, to name but some important developments.

The updating of chapters with some of this new information has been tackled by some authors, by the tagging on of relevant information. This sadly fails. Work on the majority of cases as the overall discussion of the chapter does not necessarily fit naturally with the new points raised by recent research. A better approach to try and tackle this delay in conception of the book to publication may have been to include an epilogue detailing recent developments as well as providing an introduction outlining the developmental history of motor neurone diseases and their organisation into central motor pathways. This latter topic is taken up in chapters 4 and 13, but an account earlier on would have put discussion in later chapters of the book into a clearer context. Furthermore chapter 13 on the somatic motor neurones and descending motor pathways (a 72 page chapter), seemed out of place in its discussion and attention to the neorontanatomical detail in a book that has as its main topic a diffuse neurodegenerative process. Indeed, the individual biases of authors is always difficult to accommodate in a multi-author book. But the authors do not deviate much in the chapter on theories of causation, Appel et al emphasise the evidence for an auto immune basis to MND. This in itself is not a bad thing but does rather detract from other possible causative factors and may unduly distort the field to the reader who simply reads this chapter in isolation.

Overall the book represents an impressive body of work relating to MND, but chapters on the cognitive deficits in this condition and the role of anti-GM1 antibodies in distinguishing MND and multifocal motor neuropathy with conduction block would have been welcome. The authors are extremely well referenced, and issues are dealt with that are often skipped over by books of this type—for example, the chapters on the management of MND and the concluding chapter from the spouse of a patient with MND being notable examples. It is therefore a book which serves to summarise a complex and evolving field, and although that summary is somewhat dated it is not without relevance and importance to the neurologist’s current management of this disease.

ROGER BARKER


This text book has 344 pages of fairly small print, which is well laid out and beautifully illustrated. It also contains a large amount of information in tabulated form. The material is set out in 12 chapters covering the common neurological syndromes and investigations. This book is comprehensive in its approach. This may appeal to some of its intended readers . . . medical students, house officers and non-neurologist practitioners. For others, its detailed, all-embracing comprehensiveness may impede comprehension. In general this group of readers requires more help in the identification of common, important, day-to-day neurology from the large mass of rare conditions which are the responsibility of the neurological specialist. The textbook may attract young neurologists in the early stages of their training.

IAN WILKINSON

NOTICE

Announcement from the British Neuro-psychiatry Association: 1996 summer meeting

The 1996 Summer meeting will be held on 14–16 July at Robinson College, Cambridge. It will include topics on neurodevelopment, language, and the presentation of short scientific papers and single case videos by members. The Association’s AGM will be held on 16 July.

For further details of these meetings please contact: Sue Garratt, Administrative Assistant, BNPA, 17 Clocktown Mews, London N1 7BB. Telephone/Fax: 0171 226 5949.

For details of membership of the BNPA, which is open to medical practitioners in psychiatry, neurology, and related clinical neuroscience, please contact: Dr Jonathan Bird, Secretary BNPA, Burden Neurological Hospital, Stoke Lane, Stapleford, Bristol, BS1 1QT. Telephone: 01179 702121 ext 2925/2929 or Sue Garratt at the address given above.


In the past 10 years a large number of neurologists and ophthalmologists have gained a great deal of practical personal experience of the use of the toxin in the treatment of various movement disorders. They have shared this knowledge at scientific meetings but until now there has been no comprehensive source for reference or manual for practice. Both of these books set out to redress this deficiency and they are both very welcome additions to the literature. Both books give clinical descriptions of the conditions suitable for injection treatment and brief accounts of other methods of management. There are detailed accounts of injection techniques and does the illustrations of the cervical muscle anatomy being rather clearer in the English book. Strabismus, blepharospasm, hemifacial spasm and cervical and laryngeal dystonia are covered comprehensively. Upper limb dystonia and spasticity are also well covered. More novel indications receive less space and some—cerebral palsy, therapeutic pross and oscillobasia—are better dealt with in the English volume while sphincter problems and facial wrinkles receive more in the American.

The American book is based on the Consensus Development Conference sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and Food and Drug Administration in 1990 but most of the chapters have been updated with references up to 1993. Like all multi-author books particularly in rapidly advancing fields there is some overlap and repetition and there are analyses of relatively small series of patients which characterise the introduction of any new therapeutic technique. The foreword is by Alan B Scott, the ophthalmologist who first used the toxin on a patient with strabismus in 1977 and contains an interesting personal historical perspective by Edward J Schantz, the toxicologist who first worked on the toxin in 1944 and was responsible for the early supplies to Scott.

The English volume is considerably smaller and shows more consistency of style indicating firmer editorial control. The section devoted to basic science and toxicology is much briefer although coming a year later it is able to give a clearer account of the sites of action of the different botulinum toxins. The appendix contains a useful list of resources and patient organisations.

One of the themes that have an essential companion for anyone starting an injection clinic or expanding his repertoire into the less common indications for this important and exciting addition to the neurological therapeutic armoury. Dr Moore’s book will be in my clinic and probably open but I am pleased to be able to refer to the American volume when preparing lectures on the subject.

JOHN PILLING

Short Notices

Readers may be interested in:

