Letters to the Editor

Pseudotumour after arteriovenous malformation embolisation

The association between venous outflow obstruction and the development of pseudotumour syndrome is well known, although the mechanism by which the rise in CSF pressure is brought about is less certain. Although there is much evidence that the manifestations are a result of a disturbance of CSF dynamics, previous reports have focused solely on a disturbance to absorption. We present a case in which it is proposed that alterations in CSF formation, and to a lesser extent absorption, are responsible for the development of the syndrome.

At 2 years of age, as part of investigating a failure of normal growth, a female infant underwent cerebral CT. This showed an unexpected arteriovenous malformation involving the vein of Galen. Although there was no evidence of cardiac failure or hydrocephalus associated with this, assessment by angiography was advised. This, initially declined by the parents, was not undertaken until the age of 5 years when vertigo and intermittent numbness of the left arm and leg had been present for about 12 months.

Angiography showed a deep right temporal lobe arteriovenous malformation consisting of three separate fistulae supplied by the right posterior cerebral and posterior communicant arteries. These drained into a large venous varix which subsequently drained into the Galenic venous system. A cerebral blood flow study showed a steep syndrome affecting the right frontoparietal area, and a decision was made to attempt embolisation. Complete occlusion of the fistulae was achieved by transarterial platinum coil embolisation.

The patient complained of right sided headache for 24 hours after the procedure, resolving with minor analgesia. Brain CT the next day was reported as normal. A full ophthalmological examination the following day showed normal fundi and fields. Apart from headache for 24 hours after the procedure, recovery was complete, and the parents, was not undertaken until the age of 5 years when vertigo and intermittent numbness of the left arm and leg had been present for about 12 months.

Resolution of the thrombus, recruitment of venous collaterals, and hence an increase in absorptive capacity would have resulted in the resolution of the syndrome.

Dandy and Blackfan,' in one of the first experiments of its type, attempted to produce hydrocephalus in dogs by ligating the vein of Galen. Their aim was to increase production, and it is possible that increases in the capillary gradient, and hence a possibly increased CSF pressure, via lumbar puncture, was that any, work has been done in the area of the relation between CSF formation and venous occlusion.

Although the above report is somewhat speculative, it could serve to explain the facts which at this stage of our understanding of CSF dynamics cannot be conclusively accounted for. A case of pseudotumour developing in the setting of minimal venous thrombosis, particularly in part of the venous system not thought to play a major part in the absorption of CSF, must force us to reconsider our opinions as to the relation between venous obstruction and CSF dynamics.

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False negative polymerase chain reaction on cerebrospinal fluid samples in tuberculous meningitis established by culture

The polymerase chain reaction (PCR) has been reported to be of diagnostic value when performed on CSF samples in tuberculous meningitis.\(^1\) Rapid amplification of Mycobacterium tuberculosis specific DNA enables results to be available within 48 hours and can influence treatment decisions.

Recently two patients presented to our hospital with symptoms and signs suggestive of tuberculous meningitis. Examination of CSF disclosed a lymphocytic exudate. Repeated samples were sent to a British referral laboratory where CSF PCR for M tuberculosis was reported negative. Despite this, antimycobacterial treatment was continued for 12 months and both patients responded clinically. Several weeks after the negative PCR result, M tuberculosis was cultured on Lowenstein-Jensen slopes from CSF taken from both patients. False negative PCR in tuberculous meningitis established by culture has rarely been reported. The two patients are described to emphasise the dangers of overreliance on PCR in cases of suspected tuberculous meningitis. Premature cessation of treatment would have had tragic consequences for the two patients concerned.

The first patient was a 28 year old Asian man, last in India 8 years previously. He was sent from a clinic to hospital for incision and drainage of two deep seated Staphylococcus...
aurus abscesses. While an inpatient he complained of headaches and nausea and developed a low grade pyrexia and meningitis. Brain CT was normal. Lumbar puncture disclosed a high opening pressure (19 cm CSF), 133 white blood cells/μl, predominately lymphocytes (59% protein (1.61 g/l)), and low CSF/blood glucose ratio (1.7/6.1). A sample of 0.5 ml CSF was sent to a British referral laboratory and PCR for \textit{M tuberculosis} was negative. Twenty four hours later, because of increasing confusion and agitation, treatment with intravenous acyclovir, antituberculous chemotherapy (600 mg rifampicin, 300 mg isoniazid, 2 g pyrazinamide, and 10 mg pyridoxine daily), and dexamethasone was commenced. Clinically he showed signs of improvement and was discharged home 2 weeks later on the above treatment. A repeat lumbar puncture 4 weeks later showed similar results. A CSF PCR for \textit{M tuberculosis} was again negative although a fully sensitive \textit{M tuberculosis} grew 12 weeks later from the first sample on Lowenstein-Jensen slopes.

The second patient was a 21 year old Kenyan woman living in the united Kingdom for 3 years. She had presented with a 3 month history of photophobia and occipital headaches. She had no other systemic symptoms. She had had peritoneal tuberculosis diagnosed at the age of 6 years during laparotomy for an appendectomy and had received antituberculous medication for 1 month only. On examination she had mild neck stiffness and a partial left third cranial nerve palsy. Brain CT was normal. Lumbar puncture results showed a high opening pressure (15 cm CSF), 90 white blood cells/μl, predominantly lymphocytes, a raised protein concentration (1.62 g/l), and a low CSF/blood glucose ratio. At the same referral laboratory CSF PCR for \textit{M tuberculosis} was negative although a fully sensitive \textit{M tuberculosis} grew 12 weeks later from the first sample on Lowenstein-Jensen slopes.

We are grateful to Dr Deborah Binzi-Gascogne of the Leeds mycobacterium laboratory, where the PCR tests were performed and who provided additional information for the manuscript.

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9 False negative polymerase chain reaction on cerebrospinal fluid samples in tuberculous meningitis.

There have been few studies in the literature concerned solely with the use of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to identify \textit{Mycobacterium tuberculosis} DNA directly from CSF. These studies suggest that in some cases, PCR may be more sensitive than culture; however, in the largest study, performed by Nguyen et al., specimens from seven patients, who were culture positive for \textit{M tuberculosis} were not positive by PCR. The study did report on 22 culture negative, PCR positive patients, suggesting that PCR may be more sensitive than culture. Studies comparing PCR with culture in \textit{M tuberculosis} using other clinical specimens, particularly respira-
yory samples, have reported that PCR may be less sensitive than culture for the detection of \textit{M tuberculosis} and that the low sensitivity correlated with low colony counts on culture. Dalovisio et al. also reported that multiple specimens may be required to improve the sensitivity of the test in some patients. In the two cases described above, colonies were seen after incubation for 12 and 8 weeks on \textit{L} slopes, suggesting a low inoculum.

The PCR has been reported to detect the equivalent of 1–10 mycobacteria in in vitro testing. However, lower sensitivity is found with clinical specimens. PCR may be the result of inhibitors of PCR present in the reaction, poor lysis of mycobacteria, and the uneven distribution of mycobacteria in clinical specimens.

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been recognised in Dejerine-Sottas disease, peripheral neuropathy with an early onset in childhood, and a more severe phenotype than CMT1. CMT1 and Dejerine-Sottas disease are characterised by thickening of peripheral nerves, and thickening of the cauda equina, nerve roots, and ganglia have often been found. Although cranial nerves are generally spared in CMT, thickening of the acoustic or optic nerve has been reported in some cases. We report here on a Japanese patient who exhibited severe polyneuropathy, bilateral trigeminal thickening on MRI, and an abnormality of the auditory brain stem response. Gene analysis disclosed a novel missense mutation (His81Arg) of P0. The cranial nerve involvements in this patient may be associated with the novel missense mutation of P0 (His81Arg).

A 15 year old Japanese girl presented with CMT disease. She showed delayed motor development. Although she became ambulant at 1 year and 8 months of age, she was never able to run. She was referred to our hospital due to progression of her gait abnormality. Her mental age and higher brain function were normal. Neurological examination disclosed weakness in both proximal and distal muscles of the legs, decreased grasping power, sensory disturbance of distal limbs, and facial dysmorphism. Ocular motility, incoordination, autonomic dysfunction, and cardiac involvement were not evident.

In laboratory findings, creatinine kinase was 343 IU/l. A peripheral nerve conduction study showed undetectable sensory and motor action potentials in all limbs. Auditory brain stem response showed undetectable sensory and motor responses in all limbs. The I-V interpeak intervals in auditory brain stem response were found. The I-III interpeak intervals in auditory brain stem response suggested peripheral conduction delay of the auditory nerve.

The six exons of the P. gene were amplified by the polymerase chain reaction using primers, and analysed by single strand conformational polymorphism (SSCP) and sequencing analyses. DNA sequencing of exon 3 showed a novel point mutation (A” to C at codon 81) resulting in a substitution of arginine for histidine only in the patient. A DNA duplication in chromosome 17p11.2-p12, including the peripheral myelin protein-22 (PMP 22) gene, was not present. The patient’s mother did not show any mutations in the P. gene.

CMT type 1 is caused by abnormalities in myelin protein of Schwann cells. Repeated demyelinating and remyelinating responses in the peripheral nerve result in diffusely enlarged diameters of nerves in CMT type 1, and thickening of the cauda equina, nerve roots, and ganglia has also been found. Although blepharoptosis, ophthalmoplegia, facial weakness, deafness, dysphagia, and dysphonia in CMT have been previously reported, clinical involvement in the cranial nerves is rare and thickening of cranial nerves has not been reported except for the acoustic or optic nerves in some cases.

In the present study, our patient showed severe clinical manifestations of early onset and undetectable conduction velocities. Therefore, this patient was considered to have a severe form of CMT, or Dejerine-Sottas disease. Although her facial sensation, mastication power, and hearing acuity were normal, she also had atrophy of the lower limbs, drop foot, a steppage gait, claw hands, and deformities. Optic atrophy, incoordination, autonomic dysfunction, and cardiac involvement were not evident.

In laboratory findings, creatinine kinase was 343 IU/l. A peripheral nerve conduction study showed undetectable sensory and motor action potentials in all limbs. Auditory brain stem response showed abnormal prolongation of the I-III interpeak (2.81 ms on the right side, 2.88 ms on the left side). Brain MRI (figure) showed significant thickening of bilateral trigeminal nerves (7 mm) compared with that of controls (3.15 ± 1.62 mm (mean ± 2 SD), n=20). However, other cranial, spinal nerves and roots were not thick on physical examination or MRI study. Sural nerve biopsy was not performed.

Although no detailed familial information was available, her mother (49 years old) was available, her mother (49 years old) was referred with a 3 year history of worsening bilateral headache, followed by a 6 month history of daily right frontal headache lasting for 2–3 hours associated with mild photophobia. There were no reports of seizures, nausea, or other visual disturbances. Her medical history was 3 years of treated hypertension, sickle cell carrier trait, and a cataract extraction. The patient was obese but physically normal. Neurological examination showed no papilloedema and there were no cranial nerve or long tract signs.

Brain CT showed an enhancing mass consistent with a right sided sphenoid wing

Intracranial extracerebral follicular lymphoma mimicking a sphenoid wing meningioma

Primary lymphoma in the brain is uncommon, accounting for only 2% of primary intracranial neoplasms, although its incidence seems to be dramatically increasing. Leptomeningeal lymphomas are even rarer but have been described. Although no leptomeningeal lymphoma of the follicular type has previously been reported. We present a case of a primary meningeval follicular lymphoma which mimicked a sphenoid wing meningioma, both radiologically and intraoperatively.

A 77 year old Ghanaian woman was referred with a 3 year history of worsening bitemporal headache, followed by a 6 month history of daily right frontal headache lasting for 2–3 hours associated with mild photophobia. There were no reports of seizures, nausea, or other visual disturbances. Her medical history was 3 years of treated hypertension, sickle cell carrier trait, and a cataract extraction. The patient was obese but physically normal.

Neurological examination showed no papilloedema and there were no cranial nerve or long tract signs.

Brain CT showed an enhancing mass consistent with a right sided sphenoid wing meningioma.
Histologically the lesion consisted of lymphoid tissue with an ill defined follicular centre composed of a mixture of centrocytes and centroblasts with mitotic activity (arrow). Haematoxylin and eosin, original magnification ×30.

(A) Contrast enhanced CT of the head showing a 6×6×6 cm enhancing mass lesion in the region of the right lesser sphenoid wing. (B, C) Photomicrographs of the surgical specimen. (B) Follicle centre composed of a mixture of centrocytes and centroblasts with mitotic activity (arrow). Haematoxylin and eosin, original magnification ×300. (C) Follicle centre composed of a mixture of centrocytes and centroblasts with mitotic activity (arrow). Haematoxylin and eosin, original magnification ×300.

meningioma (figure A). Right pterional craniotomy was performed and a tumour located under and adherent to the overlying dura was identified. It was entirely extracerebral, measuring 6×6×6 cm, with the greyish colour and hard consistency typical of a meningioma. The tumour and the adherent, thickened dura was macroscopically completely removed.

Histologically the lesion consisted of lymphoid tissue with an ill defined follicular architecture (figure B). The follicles varied in size and shape and infiltrated the overlying dura. Follicular centres were composed of a mixture of centrocytes and centroblasts with frequent mitotic figures and apoptotic bodies (figure C). Immunohistochemical staining confirmed that these cells had a B lymphocytic phenotype (CD20 positive) with kappa light chain restriction. Staining for Bcl-2 protein, which is an inhibitor of apoptosis and is expressed in 90% of follicular lymphoma, was found to be positive. The histological appearances and immunohistochemical profile confirmed a follicular lymphoma.

The patient made an uneventful recovery and was referred for staging investigations and consideration of postoperative therapy. An LDH estimation was within normal limits and HIV serology was negative. Whole body CT including repeat CT of the brain did not show any evidence of lymphadenopathy or lymphomatous deposit. Bone marrow examination was declined. Postoperative adjuvant whole brain or localised radiotherapy was discussed with the patient, however, she declined any further intervention. She has been closely reviewed in the follow up clinic and after 6 months there has been no clinical or radiological evidence of recurrence.

Primary intracerebral lymphomas represent about 2% of intracranial neoplasms and 2% of all lymphomas. They occur most commonly in the 6th decade of life with a female to male ratio of 1.5:1.1 The association between primary intracranial lymphoma and immunodeficiency has long been established, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the incidence has increased 10-fold over the past 3 decades with the onset of transplant surgery and, particularly, the AIDS epidemic. In postmortem studies, these neoplasms are found, on average, in 5.5% of AIDS cases, and malignant cerebral lymphoma is the most common diagnosis of a focal intracranial lesion in patients with AIDS. Malignant primary lymphoma can occur throughout the CNS and they often have a periventricular distribution. Multifocality seems to be more common in patients with AIDS. The CT scan usually shows hyperdense masses with peritumoral oedema and 92% enhance after administration of contrast medium.5,6 Leptomeningeal lymphoma is usually encountered as a late complication of systemic non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, although primary leptomeningeal lymphoma is occasionally seen. The prognosis for these tumours is poor.7 Diffuse extramedullary lymphomas have been mistaken for more common lesions: solitary primary B cell lymphoma of the cerebellar pons, mimicking acoustic neurolabyrinthopathy or meningioma has been reported;7–9 Vigusin et al.8 reported a case with a calcified temporaloparietal lymphoplasmacytic lymphoma which resembled a meningeoma; however, this tumour was entirely extradural. There is only one previous report of a follicular rather than diffuse extracranial lymphoma. Rubinstein10 described a case of follicular lymphoma metastasis found in the dura of a 61 year old man at necropsy. We found no report of a primary follicular extracerebral lymphoma. Similar radiological and intraoperative appearances of the tumour in our case to sphenoid wing meningioma suggest that this entity should be considered as a rare differential diagnosis.

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Determinants of the copper concentration in cerebrospinal fluid

The measurement of CSF copper concentration can serve as an indicator of brain copper concentration.1,4 However, the complex mechanisms by which copper crosses into the CSF, and the factors determining the CSF copper concentration in humans are largely obscure. Copper can pass into and out of the CSF by various mechanisms. For example, active transport through the blood-brain barrier or the blood-CSF barrier, or passive diffusion of the free or the bound fraction (bound to albumin or coeruloplasmin) through the blood-CSF barrier. We studied the factors influencing CSF copper concentration using a stepwise multiple linear regression model. The independent variables were age, plasma coeruloplasmin, CSF/serum albumin ratio, total serum copper concentration, and calculated serum free copper concentration (based on serum coeruloplasmin and total serum copper concentration). The CSF copper concentration was treated as a dependent continuous type. We investigated lumbar CSF samples from 113 patients. These patients had dementia, extrapyramidal, or tremor symptoms; lumbar puncture was performed to exclude Wilson’s disease, and none of the patients had the disease. Copper was measured by flameless atomic absorption (Perkin Elmer, HGA 500, Ueberlingen, Germany). Coeruloplasmin was determined nephelometrically (Beckman Instruments, Brea, CA, USA). The age of the patients was 50.0 (SD15.5) years; 50 were women and 63 were men. Mean serum coeruloplasmin concentrations were 394.3 (SD 79.7) µg/l. Mean serum copper concentrations were 1194 (SD 335) µg/l. Mean calculated free copper concentrations in serum were 78.5 (SD 1285) µg/l. Mean CSF copper concentration was 14.16 (SD 6.6) µg/l. The mean albumin ratio (AR) was 6.63×10−4. The mean ratio of calculated free copper concentration to total serum copper was 6.6%, the ratio of CSF copper to serum copper was 1.2%, and the ratio of free serum copper to CSF copper was 18%. In the

[Image 72x361 to 219x740]

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A rare case of solitary interhemispheric myofibroma in a child

A case of congenital fibrosarcoma was first diagnosed by William and Schrum in 1954 as a distinct form of juvenile fibromatosis characterised by multifocal fibrous, white-yellow cut surface appearance. Microscopically, it consisted of hypercellular fascicular and storiform areas, alternating with a haemangiopericytoma-like pattern. Immunohistochemical studies showed strong immunoreactivity for vimentin and smooth muscle actin. Scattered cells showed immunoreactivity for CD34 and EMA. Subsequently, the lesion was reclassified as an extraosseous desmoid tumour. The patient presented with a palpable mass in the right lower quadrant of the abdomen and was referred for further evaluation.

The tumour was excised and histologically confirmed to be a fibrous soft-tissue tumour with areas of myxoid and collagenous tissue. Immunohistochemical analysis demonstrated positivity for vimentin, CD34, and smooth muscle actin. The tumour did not show any signs of recurrence or metastasis.

This case highlights the importance of early diagnosis and intervention in the management of solitary interhemispheric myofibromas, which can present with significant clinical symptoms and require prompt surgical intervention.

myoglobin. Ultrastructural examination showed elongated cells with surrounding collagen fibrils, some showing intracytoplasmic myofilaments.

Solitary lesions of infantile myofibromatosis are more common than multiple lesions, with twice as many males as females being affected, and generally involve the skin and soft tissues, especially of the head and neck. Solitary lesions are less commonly found in viscera or bones. Involvement of the CNS is exceedingly rare and only one other case of a solitary mass is reported along with few cases of CNS involvement in the generalised form of infantile myofibromatosis. The prognostic is best for cases with solitary masses and less favourable for multicentric cases, particularly where visceral lesions are present, in which morbidity and mortality derive predominantly from pulmonary involvement or mass effect.

The differential diagnosis for this lesion included meningioma, schwannoma, and haemangiopericytoma. Regionally, the histology was reminiscent of the rare microcystic haemangiopericytoma. Regionally, the histology was reminiscent of the rare microcystic haemangiopericytoma. Regionally, the histology was reminiscent of the rare microcystic haemangiopericytoma. However, there were differences in the immunohistochemical staining for actin, unlike this tumour.

Diagnosis of exclusion and shows no reactivity for actin, unlike this tumour.

Antonaxial polyneuropathy and encephalopathy in a patient with verotoxin producing Escherichia coli (VTEC) infection

Escherichia coli serotype O157:H7 causes serious food poisoning worldwide, especially in children and elderly people. It is also called verotoxin producing E. coli (VTEC), which produces a cytotoxic Shiga-like toxin. Gastrointestinal, haemorrhagic, and urological effects are well known in VTEC infection, and neurological problems are likely to be more frequent than is generally recognised. We describe antonaxial polyneuropathy and encephalopathy in a young female patient associated with haemolytic-uraemic syndrome caused by VTEC infection. A 26 year old woman began to have abdominal pain and haemorrhagic diarrhoea. She was admitted to an emergency hospital and diagnosed as having haemorrhagic colitis due to probable food poisoning. Her urine volume was increased and there was decreased serum creatinine increased, and she was transferred to our hospital. On the 9th day she had a high fever of 39.7°C with increased C reactive peptide of 7.6 mg/l and a leukocytosis of 17 800/mm³. She was in a state of anuria and her blood analysis showed severe kidney dysfunction (increased serum creatinine of 6.76 mg/l). She had severe anaemia (haemoglobin 6.0 g/dl), fragmenation, and tear drop deformation of red blood cells in the blood smear and increased lactate dehydrogenase concentration of 4095 IU (normal range 230–460 IU), suggestive of haemolytic-uraemic syndrome. She was treated with antibiotics, plasma exchange, and continuous renal replacement therapy. Our patient was diagnosed as having VTEC infection, because of a typical history of an acute haemorrhagic colitis, the cultured growth of enterohaemorrhagic E.coli O157:H7, and the detection of verotoxin in her stool. She had haemolytic-uraemic syndrome (haemolytic anaemia, thrombocytopenia, and uraemia, following diarrhoea), which is the main complication of VTEC infection. Experently, vero cells, an immortalised primate kidney cell line, by the administration of the doses of verotoxin through the process of apoptosis. Verotoxin shows similar cytotoxicity on human glomerular microvascular endothelial cells via inflammatory cytokines such as tumour necrosis factor-a, which induced an increase in the numbers of verotoxin receptors, leading to a microvascular thrombosis. Our patient was treated with antibiotics, plasma exchange, and continuous haemodialysis, with benefit.

During the course of the disease, our patient was in a delirious state with visual hallucinations and tonic convulsion. She showed mild brain swelling on CT and diffuse slow waves in the frontal area on EEG, evidence of encephalopathy. Previous reports have shown that the incidence of encephalopathy in haemolytic-uraemic syndrome (mostly of VTEC infections) is 30% to 52%, including seizures in 17%–44%, altered consciousness in 7%–40%, and paralysis in 1%–16%. Many of the patients, including ours, seemed to have metabolic encephalopathy, but some developed encephalopathy without metabolic abnormalities. There is experimental evidence that verotoxin has direct virulence to both endothelial cells and neurons in the nervous system, and its initial lesion is in the hypothalamic areas, then given 250 mg/day diphenylhydantoin. During the next two weeks her kidney function, haemolytic anaemia, and encephalopathy gradually improved. After recovery of consciousness she began to complain of numbness of the limbs, manifested by the legs. She described feeling like frost bite when she was lying on the bed, and this gradually exacerbated to be a burning pain. On examination she was alert and cooperative. Her cranial nerves were normal. Muscle strength was normal and coordination was intact. Deep tendon reflexes were decreased in the four limbs. Sensation for vibration was impaired in the lower legs, but preserved for pin prick, light touch, and joint sensation. Routine laboratory data including haematological studies, serum chemistry, urinalysis, and CSF analysis were normal. Serum concentrations of vitamin B1, B6, and B12 were normal. Nerve conduction studies were carried out on her right limbs, and showed normal findings in the distal latencies, motor conduction velocities, and F wave latencies of the median, ulnar, and tibial nerves, and no evidence of conduction block. However, there were decreased amplitudes of the sensory nerve action potentials (0.18–0.21 mV) and sural (0.98V) nerves. These findings and the clinical features confirmed the diagnosis of sensory dominant, axonal polyneuropathy. She was given 300 mg/day sulfameth (an anti-inflammatory agent) and 1500 µg/day mechodobamin (vitamin B12) without effect. Two weeks after administration of 300 mg/day oral mexiletin, her numbness and pain gradually disappeared. The patient was diagnosed as having VTEC infection, because of a typical history of an acute haemorrhagic colitis, the cultured growth of enterohaemorrhagic E.coli O157:H7, and the detection of verotoxin in her stool. She had haemolytic-uraemic syndrome (haemolytic anaemia, thrombocytopenia, and uraemia, following diarrhoea), which is the main complication of VTEC infection. Experently, vero cells, an immortalised primate kidney cell line, by the administration of the doses of verotoxin through the process of apoptosis. Verotoxin shows similar cytotoxicity on human glomerular microvascular endothelial cells via inflammatory cytokines such as tumour necrosis factor-a, which induced an increase in the numbers of verotoxin receptors, leading to a microvascular thrombosis. Our patient was treated with antibiotics, plasma exchange, and continuous haemodialysis, with benefit.
spreading into the hippocampus and the brainstem. The convulsions in our patient were successfully treated with 250 mg/day diphenhydantoin, and her encephalopathy gradually improved during plasma exchange and haemodialysis.

After recovering consciousness, she began to complain of numbness of her limbs, and a burning pain which exacerbated in the night. Nerve conduction studies and the clinical features confirmed the diagnosis of sensory-dominant, axonal polyneuropathy. At this stage metabolic abnormalities were not detected and serum concentrations of vitamins B1, B6, and B12 were normal. Her numbness and tingling sensation ameliorated after 2 weeks administration of 300 mg/day oral mexiteline, an agent with a membrane stabilizing effect. Up to now, to our knowledge, peripheral neuropathy has not been reported in VTEC infection other than in one patient, by Hamano et al, who showed bilateral phrenic nerve palsy for 2 weeks after recovering consciousness. The above experimental evidence suggests that microcircular disturbance of microvessels to the peripheral nerves by verotoxin could cause axonal neuropathy in VTEC infection.

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Crying spells as symptoms of a transient ischaemic attack

In the absence of depression, crying spells associated with neurological disease usually result from pseudobulbar palsy or, more rarely, from crying seizures. To our knowledge, there are no prior reports of crying spells heralding or signifying a transient ischaemic attack. In this report, we present a case of transient ischaemic attack, which involved lacrimation and “sobbing,” abruptly ceased after 5 minutes. Within 30 minutes of his initial crying spell, his headache had resolved but he became aware of numbness over his left face and numbness and pain in his left neck and arm. The numbness was not progressive, and the patient did not complain of paraesthesias in his trunk or legs. He had photophobia, nausea or vomiting, blurred vision, visual obscurations, difficulty swallowing, dysarthria, or focal weakness. Over the next 2 to 3 hours, he had five more crying spells, each lasting 5 to 10 minutes, occurring out of context, without precipitating factors or sadness, with an acute onset and offset, and without alteration of consciousness. The patient’s left face and arm numbness persisted during and between these spells but abruptly resolved shortly after his last crying spell. This patient had hypertension, diabetes mellitus, coronary artery disease, an old myocardial infarction, raised cholesterol concentrations, and a history of heavy smoking.

On examination between recurrent crying spells, his blood pressure was 143/92 with a regular pulse of 62, and there were no carotid bruits. His mental status was normal. Cranial nerve examination revealed bilateral temporal wasting associated with left facial flattening of the left nasolabial fold and decreased pinprick sensation over his left face with an occasional mild facial twitching. Cranial nerves IX–XII were intact, and gag and reflex and palate elevation were intact and symmetric. He did not have dysthria or a brisk jaw jerk. The rest of the neurological examination showed mild weakness in his left upper arm, and decreased pinprick and temperature sensation over the left half of his body. His gait was wide-based with a +2 plantar set, and without V plantar response. His regular pulse of 62, and there were no carotid bruits and no carotid Doppler studies.

Crying and dacyrocystic seizures also occur but are rare. These seizures are part of the range of complex partial seizures and usually emanate from the right temporolimbic system. Crying seizures may result from prior cerebral infarctions. Although our patient had mild stretching of his left face, he did not have any other evidence suggesting definite seizure activity.

It is likely that this patient had a single transient ischaemic attack with multiple crying spells. The localisation of his attack is unclear; involvement of the right thalamus or neighbouring internal capsule is a possibility. Similar to spells of laughter, spells of crying may occur in relation to unilateral cerebrovascular events. Although most reports of crying after unilateral strokes have reported left hemispheric lesions, crying also may result from right hemispheric strokes. Even more similar to our patient, sudden laughing spells, “le fou rire prodomique,” rarely precede strokes involving the left capsular-thalamic, lenticular-caudate, or pontine regions. Our patient may have had a comparable phenomenon from the right hemisphere. The spells of crying also may result from pseudobulbar palsy or, more rarely, from cerebral hemisphere lesions. A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. The mechanism for this phenomenon may have been temporary activation or stimulation of ischaemic motor pathways.

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Crying as a manifestation of a transient ischaemic attack. He presented with paroxysmal crying spells followed by a left sided hypaesthesia and a left lateral weakness. Inotropic effects of intracerebral crying and focal neurological findings. The patient was a 55 year old right handed man who presented with acute, uncontrolled crying spells followed by left sided paraesthesias. Around 6.00 am he woke with a diffuse headache and suddenly started crying for no apparent reason. There was no accompanying feeling of sadness. This crying, which involved lacrimation and “sobbing,” abruptly ceased after 5 minutes.

Continuous drop type of orthostatic hypotension

Orthostatic hypotension has usually been evaluated for 2–10 minutes after standing. Multiple system atrophy (MSA: Shy-Drager syndrome) is one of the neurodegenerative diseases which show marked orthostatic hypotension. We studied changes of blood pressure for more than 20 minutes after standing in 30 patients with MSA. The patients lay down on a tilting table, and an intravenous cannula was introduced into the cubital vein more than 30 minutes before the 25 minute test of 60° head up tilt. Blood pressure and heart rate were recorded every minute with an automatic sphygmomanometer. Patients could clearly be classified into two groups in terms of the time taken to reach the minimum blood pressure. In 12 patients systolic blood pressure fell rapidly, reached a minimum within 5 minutes, and then remained stable or partially recovered (early drop type); whereas, in 13 patients blood pressure fell immediately after tilting but kept decreasing by more than 8 mm Hg from that at 5 minutes (mean 12.9 mm Hg;
maximum 74 mm Hg), taking more than 10 minutes to reach the minimum (continuous drop type) (figure). The other five patients could not remain standing for more than 5 minutes because of symptoms of orthostatic hypotension. No patient showed the sudden drop type (figure). The other five patients with MSA the blood pressure drops continuously on standing. The continuous blood pressure drop is caused by continuous reduction of cardiac output. A part of the mechanism for continuous reduction of cardiac output should be of reflex tachycardia and no significant release of noradrenaline which are caused by interruption of the baroreflex arc, as is known in MSA.1 However, further explanation, such as continuous vasodilatation of the volume vessels, is necessary for the difference in mechanisms between the early drop type and the continuous drop type. As we did not record heart rate and blood pressure continuously and did not evaluate ventricular function by echocardiography, the final conclusion and its interpretation require further study.

We think that more than a 20 minute tilt up study is needed to evaluate orthostatic hypotension and that reduced endurance of exercise and the syncope that occurs some time after standing should be considered symptoms of a continuous drop in blood pressure.

Continuous drop type of orthostatic hypotension during 25 minute tilt up in a patient with MSA. SBP=systolic blood pressure; HR=heart rate; CO=cardiac output; SVR=systemic vascular resistance; NA=plasma noradrenaline concentration.

CORRESPONDENCE

Respiratory aspects of neurological disease

An account of respiratory aspects of neurological disease, such as the highly informative one presented,1 would be incomplete without mention of breathlessness resulting from neurogenic pulmonary oedema, characterised by an “increase in extravascular lung water in patients who have sustained a change in neurological condition”.2 Neurological disorders associated with this syndrome include subarachnoid haemorrhage, middle cerebral artery stroke, and cerebellar haemorrhage.3 Brain stem stroke, acute hydrocephalus due to colloid cyst of the third ventricle, closed head injury, and status epilepticus, were also documented as risk factors in a literature review by Smith and Matthay,2 who proposed, on the basis of their own study, that increased pulmonary vascular hydrostatic pressure might be a more significant aetiopathogenic mechanism than increased pulmonary capillary permeability.4 A more direct link between neurogenic myocardial damage and pulmonary oedema can be postulated when subarachnoid haemorrhage is complicated by reversible severe left ventricular dysfunction, as documented in two cases reported by Wells et al.3


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Idiopathic cerebellar ataxia associated with celiac disease: lack of distinctive neurological features

Although applauding the contribution of Pellecchia et al to the more widespread recognition of the association between gluten sensitivity and ataxia we disagree that ataxia associated with gluten sensitivity lacks “distinctive neurological features”. Both their data and those of ourselves indicate that this group of patients can be distinguished by the late (non-childhood) onset of gait ataxia with relatively mild upper limb signs, analogous to Harding's group 1. Again, coexistent neurophysiologic abnormalities common in these patients, found in two out of three of the patients of Pellecchia et al and 21 of our 28. We agree that gastrointestinal symptoms are rare: rather than entitling their paper “lack of distinctive neurological features”, perhaps “lack of distinctive gastroenterological features” might have been more appropriate!

We were surprised at the high specificity and sensitivity of increased antigliadin antibody titres in their hands. Although we found both IgA and IgG antigliadin antibodies to be invaluable screening tools in patients with ataxia, only 11 of our 28 patients with increased antigliadin antibodies had histology of overt coeliac disease on duodenal biopsy, the remainder having normal or non-specific inflammatory changes but with an HLA genotype in keeping with gluten sensitivity. It is interesting to note that despite the often quoted high sensitivity for coeliac disease of increased antiendomysium antibody titres, such was found in only one of three patients of Pellecchia et al with coeliac disease. This concurs with our impression of very modest sensitivity of antiendomysium antibodies in gluten ataxia.

Gluten sensitivity is common in patients with ataxia, and can be identified by increased antigliadin antibody titres in the presence of appropriate histocompatibility antigens. Although the clinical features of gluten ataxia are not entirely specific, they are increased antigliadin antibody titres in the presence of ataxia, and can be identified by in-...
the EMG pattern in patients with myotonic dystrophy show a multitude of defects including expression of myotonia, myopathy, muscular atrophy, and neural abnormalities. 1, 2

The possible management of myotonia and some of its clinical manifestations, such as dysmnesia,1 by use of myotonic drugs (disopyramide and procainamide), justifies the use of the same pharmacological approach in anal sphincter dysfunction manifested in a few cases of myotonic dystrophy.

We conclude that treatment of faecal incontinence with procainamide should always be attempted before any surgical option in patients with myotonic dystrophy.

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Flail arm syndrome or Vulpian-Bernhart's form of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis

We read with interest the article by Hu et al concerning flail arm syndrome, a distinctive variant of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. The authors presented a subgroup of patients affected by amyotrophic lateral sclerosis that presented signs of lower motor neuron disease in the upper limbs without significant functional involvement of other regions upon clinical presentation. This subgroup of patients is clinically characterised by the display of progressive atrophy and weakness in the arms with little effect on the bulbar muscles or legs. Atrophy and loss of strength affect the upper limb muscles in a more or less symmetric manner, prevalent in the proximal muscles. The comparative study with the rest of the amyotrophic lateral sclerosis group supplies very interesting details for the physician, such as a clear predominance among men, and a longer median survival. They conclude by suggesting that this syndrome could be a new variant of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

Finally, the authors carry out a historical review and refer to the fact that this distinctive amyotrophic lateral sclerosis variant was probably first described by Gowers in 1886, furnished with exquisite graphic illustrations.

To this effect, we draw attention to prior descriptions of the same syndrome, reported by Vulpian in 1886, known in Franco-German literature as Vulpian-Bernhart’s form.

In his book Maladies du Système Nerveux Vulpian described a patient who showed signs of weakness and symmetric proximal atrophy of neurogenic origin, and called it chronic anterior poliomyelitis. The patient showed symptoms of proximal amyotrophy, and signs of derivation and upper motor neuron involvement. Since then, in those countries and other countries under their influence,1, 2 we have come to use the eponym of Vulpian-Bernhart’s syndrome to describe those forms of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis with more or less symmetric involvement of the proximal muscles of the upper limbs at the clinician onset.

A certain enigma exists surrounding the characteristic distribution of weakness and muscle atrophy. The reason for the prevalence in the proximal muscles of the upper limbs is unknown. We can furnish little more information in this respect. However, in the 1960s, in the differential diagnosis of this syndrome, it was observed that the muscles predominantly affected in Vulpian-Bernhart’s form were the deltoideus, the supraespinatus, the ster- nocleidomastoideus, and the teres minor. The predominant involvement in these muscles permitted its distinction from that previously called Erb’s dystrophy. 3, 4

As a consequence of the atrophy of these muscles, the upper limbs adopt a characteristic position, with the shoulders slumped, and the arms, forearms, and hands in pronation. As the illness progresses, the hand muscles are affected, with atrophy of the following muscles: opponens pollicis, flexor brevis, abductor pollicis brevis, adductor pollicis, interossei, and lumbricales, which leads to the formation of the characteristic Aran-Duchenne hand.

Obviously, signs of corticospinal involvement with hyperreflexia in the lower limbs and Babinski’s sign both appear. In the initial stages of the illness, there is no effect on the diaphragm. The presence of signs of involvement of the upper motor neuron, its different clinical evolution, and the data supplied by genetic molecular investigation allow us to distinguish the syndrome previously known as Vulpian-Bernhart’s now rebaptised as flail arm syndrome from other motor neuron syndromes such as of the spinal muscular atrophies, Kennedy’s disease, multifocal motor neuropathy, and monoclonal amyotrophy.

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Pain after whiplash

This latest study from Lithuania is an answer to many questions—namely, that the previous difficulties that these researchers had with identifying the late whiplash syndrome in Lithuania is that they were not looking "in the right place". As it turns out, the problem is that Lithuanians simply are not behaving the way many in western countries would have predicted. The evidence that whiplash patients present with at least 117 subjects is no less than overwhelming.

The first consideration is that there were 98 accident victims who reported acute symptoms, and thus were at risk for the late whiplash syndrome. How does this compare with other studies documenting the natural evolution of the late whiplash syndrome in Switzerland? The Swiss study may be useful for comparison because it too has only 117 subjects, yet the selection criteria of advertising for subjects, and has a host of other reportedly fatal flaws, and giving some benefit of the doubt, the study is said to be an accurate representation of the state of affairs in Switzerland at that time. Yet, in Switzerland, not even 60% manage to recover fully by 3 months and many of these were reporting total disability during that time, whereas the Lithuanians fully recover in 4 weeks or less, with little or no therapy, and thus the results do not behave the way many in western countries now need to enlighten ourselves and put this data to practical use in helping whiplash patients rather than resisting the inevitable.

After completion of the first historical cohort study, this more recent study selects an entirely separate, distinct sample of these "misbehaving" Lithuanians, but in a more intriguing fashion. This is the first true inception cohort study where people who have not been preselected by their attendance at emergency departments, or contaminated by therapists or lawyers, can be studied to appreciate the natural evolution of the injury which underlies whiplash association disorder grades 1 and 2. This is the study’s greatest strength. The study has, however, its limitations.

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A second consideration is that perhaps these Lithuanians are in very minor collisions. True, some of their vehicles were completely wrecked, but perhaps the vehicles were not very good quality and so were easily damaged. Perhaps that is why this cohort had such a good outcome and only minor injuries. This is an unhelpful consideration however, as studies in Canada have shown that those in more severe collisions report chronic pain as those in more severe collisions. Lithuanians seem to behave appropriately then for minor collisions (if that is what they indeed had), but Canadians seem unable to behave appropriately. Again, another cohort in the rate of recovery from whiplash injury is demonstrated.

Thirdly, there are sex differences and even differences in seat belt usage between this population and some others, but even then, it does not seem to matter what sex, age, and use of seat belts there is in other western countries, none of these preclude chronic pain. In Lithuania, those who were female, and who did not wear seat belts, still insisted on behaving as the rest of the cohort.

Finally, perhaps the Lithuanians simply refuse to report their chronic pain, and chronic pain cannot be studied in other countries in this way. The Lithuanians have no reluctance to report acute pain, but perhaps for some reason wish to “suffer in silence” in spite of chronic pain and disability. This would be a potential flaw if it was not simultaneously shown in this study that the general Lithuanian population reports the same prevalence, frequency, and character of neck pain and headache as does the general population in western countries. If there were still design barriers to identifying symptoms, the control population would have grossly underreported their symptoms. Indeed, chronic pain can and is reported by studies in many different cultures and languages, including Japan, France, Italy, and others. If researchers in these non-English speaking populations can use simple questionnaires to document the late whiplash syndrome so effectively there, then the same should be possible in Lithuania.

And so, despite the potential limitations of this study as outlined, there is no way to get around the stark realisation that the natural history of acute whiplash injury in Lithuania is a benign syndrome with 4 weeks or less of pain. Equally compelling is the fact that Lithuania is not the only place where researchers are having difficulty identifying epidemics of chronic pain. Recovery from acute whiplash injury without neurological injury or fracture routinely occurs within 4–6 weeks in Germany4 and Greece.5 The time has come for a reconciliation of these epidemiological observations with our own experience of late whiplash syndrome in western countries. The truth has been laid bare and it is our responsibility to utilise this time to help prevent the chronic pain and the suffering we otherwise encounter.

R FERRARI


BOOK REVIEWS


This book purports itself to be a comprehensive reference. Certainly the title would suggest so. However, it is clear that this is not a comprehensive text, but a book that is an update on particular timely topics in the field of pain medicine. There are sections on pain mechanisms, effects of the brain in the pharmacology of acute and chronic pain, and other chapters on postoperative pain, obstetric pain, and academic paediatric pain. There are three further chapters specifically on the management of chronic low back pain, cancer pain, and an overview of interventional pain techniques.

Many of the authors are internationally known and this is perhaps the book's strongest point—one does get a state of the art review and to this end I warmly welcome this book as an addition to the bookshelf to update a busy anaesthetist or pain specialist, though the chapters on chronic low back pain and cancer pain will also be of interest to those in other fields.

The chapter on the anatomy and physiology of pain is excellent in that it has clear explanations and a number of very helpful diagrams. Unfortunately it fails to mention increasing understanding of the role of GABA in mediating analgesia within the spinal cord and furthermore does not mention some of the other neuronal changes which are well known to occur in chronic pain states such as central sprouting and phentypic switching.

The chapter on pharmacology of acute and chronic pain is well written, but unfortunately a lot of time is spent on non-steroidal drugs. There is a review of the adjuvant drugs such as antidepressants and anticonvulsants that are used in chronic pain, however one is left at the end with a sense of knowing about the drugs but not quite to use them. There is no mention of the increasing use of gabapentin nor of other drugs that are sometimes used in chronic pain states such as clonidine and other sympathetic blockers or calcium channel blockers.

The chapter on acute postoperative pain management is well written and informative as are the chapters on obstetric and paediatric pain. The chapter on chronic low back pain by Rauck is one of the best I have seen for some time. It is a comprehensive review of both acute and chronic low back pain. It is excellent as it also mentions treatments that are often performed outside the medical specialist arena. I was pleased to see in it the mention of some of the newly evolving techniques such as facet denervation, spinal cord stimulation, and disc denervation. It was a pity that the randomised control trials which have shown facet denervation to be an outstandingly useful technique for low back pain were not mentioned. It was also a pity that the reference to the disc denervation procedure was to another text book rather than any original papers.

The chapter on cancer pain management has been written by internationally known authors and it is an excellent summary of the subject. In the section on interventional pain techniques the emphasis was on spinal cord stimulation, radiofrequency, and cryosurgery. Again this chapter has been written by an internationally well known author who concentrated on general overview of the techniques rather than a how to do it approach, which I think one would need to go to a bigger text for. In summary I think that this volume would make an excellent addition to the bookshelf of those involved in the treatment and management of pain.

RAJESH MUNGALANI


This is a really excellent book which is both comprehensive and amazingly up to date, with the inclusion of many references from as late as 1997.

As a clinical neurologist and neuropathologist with a longstanding interest in the dementia, I found it extremely valuable. The editor has done a very good job in posing a coherence, format, and style, which is often lacking from multicontributor textbooks.

The title of the book is perhaps a little misleading in that the book includes, as well as traditional neuropathology, a very comprehensive overview of the molecular biology and genetics of the dementias. As would be expected, a considerable proportion of the book is dedicated to Alzheimer's disease with chapters on both the clinical features, genetics, and the neuropathology. The frontotemporal dementias are also well covered and the book includes a chapter on theopathological developments related to chromosome 17 linked dementias. There are also sections on progressive supranuclear palsy, Huntington's disease, corticobasal degeneration, dementia with Lewy bodies, and prion diseases and vascular dementia.

The editor has managed to persuade many of the world's experts to contribute. For instance, two of some of the newly evolving techniques are reviewed by Brun and Gustafson. Genetics of Alzheimer's disease is dealt with by St George-Hyslop and the neuropathology of Alzheimer's disease by Price and coworkers.
The standard of illustrations is excellent and the style generally very readable. I shall certainly find it extremely useful as a work of reference and for teaching purposes. The editor is to be complimented on producing such a delightful work.

JOHN HODGES


I very much enjoyed reviewing this textbook of instrumented spinal surgery written by Giuseppe Tabasso under the auspices of Jürgen Harms. Dr Harms is well known to all spinal surgeons and has made a very important contribution to the development of spinal surgery over the past 20 years, based on strong personal convictions. Many surgeons who manage spinal disorders would not choose to implement all of Professor Harms’ solutions but all who have a serious interest in the surgical treatment of the spine admire and are grateful for his contribution. Within this book spinal surgeons will find a rational and practical approach which will allow them to treat a wide range of spinal disorders according to well thought out principles.

The opening chapter describes spinal biomechanics under normal and pathological circumstances mainly by using easily understood drawings and diagrams. Some of these drawings reminded me of images that I have recently seen on an interactive CD ROM that I bought for my 4 year old son. This is not a criticism and I fully support any attempt to simplify the science of biomechanics which is often cloaked in seemingly contradictory jargon. Most spinal surgeons will be able to assimilate the two basic principles which underpin much of instrumented spinal surgery—namely, that the anterior column resists load compression forces and that the posterior column acts as a tension band which when disrupted should be reconstructed in compression. The remaining chapters cover fracture management, late kyphosis, metastatic tumours, spondylolisthesis, degenerative spinal disease, and infection. Each chapter sets out the principles of management which are illustrated schematically. There then follow case studies illustrated by radiological images including CT and MRI. These have reproduced well and surgeons will admire the technical precision and excellent anatomical reductions illustrated by these clinical cases. It is, however, a source of constant annoyance to spinal surgeons that perfect postoperative films do not always correlate with good clinical results and this discrepancy remains a source of fascination and mystery.

It is in the degenerative spine that this discrepancy between radiological and clinical findings is most apparent and it is partly for this reason that the management of these conditions is often controversial. It is difficult to disagree with much of the logic presented by the authors in planning their interventions but there is a danger that inexperienced surgeons may be misled into adopting complex solutions when often more simple operations will suffice. The authors’ description of their approach to failed back surgery syndrome illustrates this problem and the inadequacies of attempting to treat a complex clinical problem by focusing on one aspect of it.

This book will be a useful addition to the shelves of spinal surgery textbooks and many orthopaedic and neurosurgical departmental libraries will wish to buy a copy.

RODNEY LAING

Surgical Disorders of the Peripheral Nerves. Edited by R BIRCH, G BONNEY, and C WYNN-PARRY. (Pp 539, £95.00). Published by Harcourt Brace and Co Ltd. London 1998. ISBN 0 443 04443 0.

I wondered, when I received this book, how I could possibly say anything adverse about a book written by three such world renowned experts. I have heard them all lecture often and have seen them all at work. They have a vast knowledge and experience of treating disorders of peripheral nerves. In clinic and the operating theatre, they have shown myself and many trainees a clarity in their planning of management of complex problems that humbles one’s own thoughts. That clarity has continued in this text book of over 500 pages. The field of peripheral nerve surgery is covered comprehensively, commencing with descriptions of anatomy, physiology, and pathological reaction to injury. This is followed in subsequent chapters with descriptions of approaches to virtually all the main peripheral nerves, and the operative management of brachial plexus injury and outcomes is covered in three detailed chapters. These are followed by chapters on nerve entrapment, neuropathy, iatropathic injury, and neoplasm within the peripheral nerve. The final section covers electrodiagnosis, pain, nerve recovery, reconstruction techniques, and rehabilitation.

The text is well written, easy to read, and supplemented by some excellent line drawings similar to those used in Lundborg’s text. There are detailed plates showing histology and various imaging techniques. Each chapter is comprehensive, containing important historical aspects as well as up to date techniques, and there is an extensive reference section. I would recommend that trainees of all specialties dealing with peripheral nerve injuries should read much of this text and it would be extremely useful as a regular reference. It would also make an important and necessary addition to most medical libraries. All clinicians would be well advised to read the chapters on iatropathic injuries, not only for the extensive causes of such injuries encompassing all medical and surgical departments, but also for the précis of the changes occurring in medical negligence claims. This text represents good value for money.

IAN WHITWORTH
Procainamide for faecal incontinence in myotonic dystrophy

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