Book reviews

NEUROPATHOLOGY AND APPLIED NEUROBIOLOGY, vol.

I, no. 1 Edited by J. B. Cavanagh. (Pp. 110; illustrated; £14.00 p.a.) Blackwell: Oxford. 1975. As scientific disciplines mature there comes a time when advanced workers find it necessary to search through many journals which are primarily aimed at a less esoteric readership. With its quarter centenary in 1975, it is appropriate that the British Neuropathological Society should sponsor a new journal which lays special stress on experimental neuropathology and neurobiology, without the priority given to studies on human neuropathology of the more clinically orientated journals.

The editor, Professor J. B. Cavanagh, is well-known for his work in this field and has a distinguished international board. The journal will be published quarterly. The first number indicates a high scientific standard, and the publication is up to the very high standard required for reproduction of electronmicrographs. Contents include the proceedings of the sponsoring society, who are to be congratulated on this new and important publication.

J. A. SIMPSON

DIAGNOSIS AND EARLY MANAGEMENT OF TRAUMA EMERGENCIES. A MANUAL FOR THE EMERGENCY SERVICE By R. J. Touloukian and T. J. Krizek. (Pp. 149; illustrated; \$10.75.) Thomas: Springfield, Ill. 1974.

It is noticed in the preface that trauma is the neglected disease of modern society, and is in fact a leading cause of death between the ages of 1 and 37 years in the U.S.A. From this excellent small vade-mecum on the diagnosis and early management of traumatic emergencies from the Yale-New Haven Hospital and the Yale University of Medicine, we have an insight into the changing manner of acute trauma care in the U.S.A. There are fewer general practitioners nowadays, and an increasing use is being made of trauma specialists, and also of physician's assistants and of specially trained nurses with nursing aides. Indeed in the Primary Care Centre, the nursing staff are in charge of triage, and are also permitted to order radiographs of the appendicular skeleton if the nurse is of the opinion that such investigations are necessary. The referral pattern is interesting, in that 77% of trauma patients arrived without referral; and 85% of non-trauma patients were self-referred. 0.6% of the trauma

patients require immediate resuscitation; 5% of the total number of patients with trauma require to be admitted to hospital. Some important advice is given on the ever-increasing medico-legal and malpractice problems in the U.S.A.

There follow two chapters, both of which are set out in the orderly and thorough (though brief) way that the contributors advise for the clinical examination and early treatment of trauma patients. The first concerns 'ambulatory problems', and contains very useful information on a wide variety of common problems that may be seen in an accident and emergency department. It also informs the reader that some 30 000 people in the U.S.A. will receive rabies prophylaxis this year.

The final chapter, on 'The life-threatening emergencies', maintains the high standard of the earlier part of this small book, with adequate descriptions of, and advice about, the initial assessment and resuscitation of the more seriously injured, and there are separate sections on trauma to the main body systems. These sections of the book can hardly be faulted, but the reviewer feels that some mention should have been made of the operation of cranial burr-holes for the emergency evacuation of an intracranial (usually extradural) haematoma, which can be a life-saving measure and should be known by all surgeons including doctors working in an accident and emergency department or a 'Primary Care Centre'. The brief section on spinal cord injuries contains sensible advice, including the recommendation that a neurosurgical opinion should be obtained if there is a definite or suspected severe spinal cord injury; that great care must be taken to prevent a 'second spinal injury'—by poor handling of the patient—and that lumbar puncture *per se* is never indicated for spinal cord injury patients. However, there is no mention of respiratory paralysis, or of hypotension, two very serious problems that are commonly seen in patients with high dorsal or with cervical spinal cord damage.

A list of selected references is provided at the end of the book, but many of these references are out of date. The index, however, is excellent. This attractive small volume can be recommended to all doctors, and for those in professions supplementary to medicine, including nurses, physiotherapists, and radiographers who are working in hospitals or other centres dealing with acute trauma.

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