Progress in Perinatal Neurology—Volume 1. Edited by Rowena Korobkin and Christian Guilleminault. (Pp 238; \$42.00.) Baltimore, Williams and Wilkins, 1981.

As Little, quoted in the preface to this book, pointed out in 1862, the act of birth occasionally "imprints upon the nervous and muscular systems of the nascent infantile organism very serious and peculiar evils". The "investigation of these evils, and their causative influences" by the technological methods available today largely form the subject of this volume (the first in a series which is a successor to *Advances in Perinatal Neurology*).

The nine chapters are written by contributors mainly from North America, with two from Australia and one from Denmark. The topics reviewed are intrapartum foetal monitoring, neonatal electroencephalography, auditory brain-stem potentials, computed tomography in the newborn, effects of viral infections on the developing nervous system, disorders of sucking and swallowing in the newborn, congenital hemiplegia, congenital central hypoventilation syndrome and follow-up of infants with perinatal hazards. The earlier chapters are likely to be of greatest interest to the paediatrician involved in the care of the newborn, while the later ones will concern those who see the slightly older child.

The chapter on computed tomography in the newborn by Fitz of The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto (co-author of an important book on paediatric neuroradiology) is an excellent review of a difficult subject in which all involved are still, to some extent, feeling their way. He discusses the difficulty in determining the norm for a newborn; the areas of low attenuation seen in the CT scan of the premature brain are, he believes, probably stages of normal development or, possibly, an extremely common abnormality in premature infants. A clear summary of the normal features of the CT scan at different stages of gestation from 24 weeks to term is accompanied by excellent illustrations.

A useful review by Seay and Griffin of the effects of viral infections on the developing nervous system considers the evidence from animals for the viral aetiology of porencephaly and hydranencephaly in lambs, cerebellar hypoplasia in mice, and hydrocephalus in hamsters, which may be relevant to human CNS malformations. In the newborn infant CNS abnormalities induced by viral infections very early in pregnancy may appear only as "develop-

mental" defects, and more sensitive virological and serological techniques are needed to detect virus or viral antigen in tissues from infants with congenital malformations.

The chapters on disorders of sucking and swallowing (by Hill and Volpe) stressing, *inter alia*, posterior fossa haemorrhage as a cause, and on the congenital central hypoventilation syndrome (by Guilleminault and Challamel) will be of great value to neonatologists.

Scandinavia has been the source of many valuable paediatric epidemiological studies, and the book closes with a report by Zachau-Christiansen on the Copenhagen Longitudinal Study. The usual neonatal neurological examination was found to be of some predictive value, though no particular items of special importance emerged. Social conditions were seen to be paramount, and the author concludes that obstetrics and neonatology need to be improved both biomedically and socially. The dangers of home deliveries, for which in today's Denmark well-to-do, well educated women fight, are stressed.

This is a book for paediatricians and paediatric neurologists rather than neurologists of the more mature individual; for those concerned in the care of the "nascent organism" it deserves a place on the working shelves.

EM BRETT

Guided Brain Operations. By Ernest A Spiegel. (Pp 246; US\$88.75, SFr 148.) Basel: S Karger AG, 1982.

With the late Henry Wycis, the author was a pioneer in human stereotactic surgery. He makes a comprehensive review of its development and clinical application up to the present time.

This work may be of interest to younger neurosurgeons, particularly in Britain and the United States, who may have had little experience of the techniques due to the advent of levodopa eighteen years ago, and the eclipse of "psycho-surgery". The various conditions for which stereotaxis is thought to be valuable include Parkinsonism, various movement disorders, mental and emotional disturbances, including aggression and sexual deviancy, chronic painful states, and other diverse conditions. Suggested sites for surgical lesions used in these conditions are given.

The lack of any critical analysis of the results of such procedures detracts from the value of the work, but may be a

reflection of the fact that Professor Spiegel is a neurophysiologist; therefore the section on the anatomy and the physiological processes of importance in planning a stereotactic lesion, is of interest. Dr Guilleminault has contributed a section on computed tomography and stereotactic surgery. This important new development will be of less value in the treatment of movement disorders where lesion-siting, for good results, depends on careful physiological monitoring, but has a promising future in the management of deep-seated tumours.

The real value of this short book is historical, with its thousand or so references, but even then it seems expensively priced.

JOHN ANDREW

Concept in Pediatric Neurosurgery, 3. Edited by A J Raimondi. (Pp 222; \$118.75.) Basel: S Karger, 1983.

The American Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery continues to further one of its main functions which is (to quote from the Preface to this volume of papers), "the education of the neurosurgical community in the modern neurosurgical care of the child".

Here are chapters on subjects ranging from the less rare (craniopharyngioma, spinal lipoma, outcome of severe head injury) to the very rare (primary cerebral neuroblastoma, cavernous haemangioblastoma of the third nerve), while others helpfully summarise experience with the CO₂ laser, ultrasound and shunt insertion, extensive spinal cord astrocytomas, aneurysms of the vein of Galen. These chapters together with those on intracranial fluid dynamics are essential reading for the experienced neurosurgeon—but even more essential for the neurosurgeon who only occasionally enters into the hazardous realm of the neurosurgery of infancy.

KENNETH TILL

The Neurology of Aging. Edited by Robert Katzman & Robert Terry. (Pp 244; £36.50.) Philadelphia: FA Davis Co. UK Agent: Quest Publishing Agency, 1983.

There have been many books on aging in recent years. Indeed, there seem to have been almost as many books on aging as hypotheses as to the aetiology of age-related disease. This book represents the compilation of 15 contributors, all but one from North America. There are ten chap-

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ters dealing with age-related memory disturbance, dementia, the motor system, the peripheral nervous system, the special senses, sleep, metabolic encephalopathy in the aged, and a particularly well-written last chapter on neurological consultation in the elderly. The book suffers from the wide-ranging nature of the topic. Clearly, aged people suffer from the same disease as anyone else, although they may have an increased risk of certain illnesses such as cancer and stroke, together with certain special problems, for example dementia. Many of the common neurological disorders, especially stroke and tumour, are not covered at all and the book will be disappointing to those who expect a wide-ranging approach to neurological disease in the elderly. The Editors' particular interest concerns the clinical and pathological features of dementia of Alzheimer's type and this subject, as one would expect, is well covered. However, editorial policy has been rather loose and there is much repetition between the chapters so that the book is difficult to read as a whole, although it would be interesting as a source of information, particularly the immunological aspects. It cannot be used as a text for those interested in geriatric medicine, although the last chapter is strongly recommended for all to read.

MICHAEL SWASH

Living with Huntington's Disease (A Book for Patients and Families). By Dennis H Phillips. (Pp 230; Cloth \$30.00; Paper \$9.95.) Wisconsin and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982.

This is an excellent book for all those concerned with Huntington's disease. Although directed to patients and families, the material it contains answers many of the questions raised by general practitioners, nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, and social workers. Indeed, it can be read with profit by neurologists and psychiatrists, who are certain to gain added insight into the complex problems posed by this illness. Dennis Phillips is Lecturer in American History at Macquarie University, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. The secret of his success with this book lies in his ability to digest the complexities of science, and the tortuosity of its prose, and then to deliver the kernel of its ideas in a manner intelligible to any reader. As he states in his preface, "The main task was to translate the most useful material in technical journals into a language everyone could understand. As a

person without medical training, I approached this project with some hesitation. I feared that the scientists and doctors would tell me that I have no business trying to work in this field. Much to my delight, the reaction was quite to the contrary. I was greeted everywhere with generous offers of assistance."

The result is a remarkable mixture of, at the one extreme, the day-to-day problems of living with Huntington's disease, and at the other, the most up-to-date scientific concepts in the field. The introductory chapter describes the fate of a fictitious patient with Huntington's disease and that of his extended family. It reads as a poignant short story illustrating the disaster of the illness. There follows a chapter on "Huntington's disease: what causes it?" Genetics and neurotransmitters are explained lucidly. There are further chapters on genetic counselling, where the debate between directive versus non-directive counselling is aired, and predictive testing, where the dilemmas posed by this issue are fairly presented. Another chapter discusses the difficulties of living "at risk" for Huntington's disease. The author draws attention to "errors of pessimism" and "errors of denial and neglect", both of which wreak destruction on the individual and his family. Indeed, sensible attention is given to the social problems caused by the disease throughout the book. The section on management of the patient with Huntington's disease is brief and drug therapy, correctly, is demoted. "Our society is preoccupied with drugs. We are encouraged to believe that all of our problems, from serious illness to love-sick loneliness, can be solved instantly by simply "popping a pill". More attention is directed to occupational and recreational therapy, and the problems of nursing care. A separate chapter deals with the problems of juvenile Huntington's disease (and the Westphal variant). There is a chapter, too, on "research prospects" in which the leads provided by genetics and genetic linkage, neurochemistry, neuro-immunology, trace metals, membrane defects, endocrinology, and defective DNA repair mechanisms are all discussed, as well as the possible value of a number of animal models of the illness. In the final chapter, the author returns to his love of history and gives a delightful vignette on the origins of the illness. The text is fully referenced to original articles and there is an excellent glossary of scientific terms. Finally, there is a valuable selected bibliography.

I would warmly recommend this book to families with Huntington's disease or pro-

fessionals involved in management of the illness. Much has been done in recent years to lift Huntington's disease from painful obscurity into the forefront of research into hereditary neurological diseases. One person has been responsible for this dramatic change, Mrs Marjorie Guthrie, who, since the death of her husband Woody from the illness, has devoted her boundless energies to furthering research and understanding of Huntington's disease. In a foreword to the book, Marjorie Guthrie writes of her feelings at the time of her husband's death—"Today as I finished reading Dennis Phillips' manuscript, all I could think of was, if only *this* book had been given to me on that terrifying day just about fourteen years ago!"

CD MARSDEN

Brain Biochemistry. 2nd ed. By HS Bachelard. (Pp 79; £2.45.) London: Chapman & Hall, 1981.

The ability to communicate a complex scientific topic in terms which are understandable to a lay audience is a gift. In this short monograph Professor Bachelard has shown that he has this ability. I found this outline study to be an excellent introduction to the biochemistry of the brain. It comprises three short sections on the appearance of the brain, neurotransmission and adaptive processes in the brain. Each is complete within its own right, providing a simple yet explicit text on each of these topics. It is refreshing to read a volume so well written. It is a relatively short book comprising only some 80 pages and therefore easily read within a few hours. It is attractively priced at £2.45 and as such is well within the reach of the audience at which it is aimed. I would strongly recommend this work to undergraduate students and to graduates from other disciplines who require a balanced introduction to the basic aspects of current brain biochemistry. It would be a major advance in science if all authors could portray their subjects with such clarity and in such a readable manner.

PG JENNER