Book reviews

nancies of the spine, there is an intriguing short report of continuous intrathecal infusion of opiates, apparently without respiratory depression or the other common side-effects encountered with intermittent administration, and a report of good analgesia with intrathecal salicylate therapy, without serious adverse effects.

Unfortunately, most of the book contains short papers about a wide variety of treatments. There is an almost complete absence of controls in these studies, and little mention of methods of pain assessment. The volume warrants a rapid scan by those with an interest in pain, but few will feel compelled to buy it for their own shelves.

JW SCADDING

Microneurosurgery 3rd Edition. Edited by Robert W Rand (Pp 832; £132.00.) Toronto: CV Mosby Co, UK: Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1985.

This third edition of a well known and established book is a substantial extension of earlier editions with new chapters and much up dated material. The only reservation is that the extension is so great that it embraces almost the whole of operative neurosurgery which increasingly employs microsurgical techniques. The term microneurosurgery is therefore almost antique like speaking of aseptic surgery. The book therefore includes chapters with laboured associations with sensory evoked potentials and vasospasm and the latest developments such as nuclear magnetic resonance. There is also a great deal of repetition, difficult to avoid amongst many authors describing essentially the same techniques.

These are minor criticisms of a superbly presented, well bound, clearly printed and beautifully illustrated book. The photographs and line diagrams, particularly the diagrams, are of the high quality to be expected in books concerned with detailed exposition of fine structures. Indeed, they do more than decorate as they are chosen to amplify as well as illustrate the excellent text. Very few photographs are poor but figs 12.20, 31.37 and 31.38 are dreadful examples and should be removed from future editions.

The book is in eight sections. The one on general principles is first rate with two chapters on the surgical microscope and instrumentation and a valuable chapter on photography and television records. Hardly surprisingly acoustic tumours

occupy a major part of the book and although there is little that has not been presented elsewhere nowhere else is there such detailed description of the various operative approaches in one volume. Nor is there much new in the section of cerebrovascular disease but the neurosurgical trainee will enjoy the clear descriptions and illustrations and particularly the sensible reasons given for particular manoeuvres. There is a small section on vertebral and spinal surgery including the final chapter on microdissection. It is advocated as a safe way of training in microsurgery which appears as its only advantage.

There are profuse references and a good index. In short, this must be regarded as the standard work on microneurosurgery and should be in every neurosurgical library, at a price that makes it good value.

EDWARD HITCHCOCK

Chemotherapy of Gliomas. Basic Research, Experience and Results. Edited by D Voth and P Krauseneck in collaboration with C Langmaid and P Glees (Pp 440; DM148.00.) Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co 1985.

There is a much wider range of information on the pathology, diagnosis and treatment of glial brain tumours in this book than its title suggests. It represents the proceedings of the 1983 Autumn Congress held at the Neurosurgical Clinic in Mainz in honour of the 65th birthday of its Director, Professor Kurt Schürmann. There are separate sections on the special and comparative pathology of the gliomas, diagnostic methods, operative and radiation therapy, and finally chemotherapy. Inevitably, in such a volume there are a number of very brief papers, little more than abstracts, but there are also longer and helpful reviews with comprehensive and recent bibliographies. In this book the reader can find accounts of recent developments in diagnosis by computed tomography and by positron emission tomography, as well as treatment by microsurgery, stereotactic interstitial irradiation and results of chemotherapy from the EORTC Brain Tumour Group, the Scandinavian Glioblastoma Study and the International Society of Paediatric Oncology multicentre trial. A final section by one of the editors provides a summary of the significant results of the meeting.

Intrinsic brain tumours continue to present a daunting and often depressing chal-

lenge, leading in some cases to a rather nihilistic approach to their management. The least that the clinician owes to his patients is that he is aware of the current developments in the area; this book provides, in compact and convenient form, an up-to-date survey of what is happening in the field in Europe.

J DOUGLAS MILLER

Evaluation and Treatment of Chronic Pain. Edited by Gerlad M Aronoff. (Pp 684; £50.00.) Baltimore: Urban & Schwarzenberg. UK: London, Pitman Publishing Ltd, 1985.

On page 343, in a chapter dealing with back pain, it is stated that "clearly the foundation of treatment is strict bed-rest . . . for a minimum of two weeks and possibly considerably longer . . .". On page 352, in another chapter on spinal disorders from a neurosurgeon's point of view, the contributor writes that "many patients accept the fact that most back problems are not serious and that acute flare-ups come and go . . . they respond to encouragement and are no worse off for pushing ahead with tennis, golf, skiing, or sailing". These different views typify the dilemma one faces with the patient with back pain, although readers are alerted "that the use of sunglasses indoors by a back pain patient is a bad prognostic sign" (page 338). The question must be whether this book with its title of *Evaluation and Treatment of Chronic Pain* helps us understand and manage common problems such as back pain. I rather doubt it.

Many of the topics have been written about many times before, and more rigorous editing would have pruned irrelevant material such as an account of gout, the immunology of rheumatoid arthritis, a discussion of ethical theory, and the basic principles of electromyography as expounded in a chapter on the "physiatric" approach to pain. A considerable proportion of the book is concerned with psychosocial aspects of pain management, and examples include contributions entitled "A cognitive-behavioral approach to chronic pain", "The social worker, family systems, and the chronic pain family" and "Chronic pain management; the nurse's role". What is not clear is whether these approaches actually help significant numbers of patients, and we are not given much information enabling us to judge.

It is difficult to form an overall impres-