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BOOK REVIEWS

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Neurosonology. Edited by CHARLES H TEGELER, VIKEN L BABIDIAN and CAMILO R GOMEZ. (Pp 513.) Published by Mosby-Year Book Inc, St Louis 1996. ISBN 0-8151-8792-0.

This multiauthor book is divided into eight sections. The basic principles of ultrasound are covered in the initial section. These are easy to follow even by those who have long since forgotten whatever physics they ever knew!

The second section considers the value of ultrasound in the diagnosis of adult extracranial arterial disease. It contains many practical points and considers the various pitfalls which may trap the unwary if a comprehensive ultrasound assessment is not performed. My only criticism is the lack of detail relating systolic and diastolic velocities with different degrees of stenosis. These are crucial measurements when assessing the severity of any stenosis, particularly in view of the need to know if a stenosis is more or less than 70%. This section covers only one tenth of the whole book which is surprising given this is the primary use of adult neurosonology; maybe the reviewer is biased!

The middle sections of the book review adult transcranial Doppler (TCD) and embolus detection with Doppler ultrasonography; this takes up almost a third of the book which seems a little excessive given their present clinical value. There is then a short section on echocardiography followed by a long section on paediatric neurosonology which covers a quarter of the book. The penultimate section discusses intraoperative and perioperative sonography; finally there are chapters on neurosonology in clinical practice and most importantly an appendix which discusses professional training guidelines, quality assurance, and accreditation in vascular ultrasound departments. These later issues are of the utmost importance: it is interesting to see how some countries

encourage or even insist on the certification of both individuals and laboratories before they are allowed to submit reports. The more widespread application of such standards should be supported.

This book is comprehensive and well written although at times a little uncritical; unfortunately, because it is a multiauthor text, several topics are covered more than once (for example, vasospasm, brain death). The overall balance of the book needs to be reviewed. Few clinicians, radiologists' or technicians would be interested in the book as a whole. The assessment of adult extracranial arterial disease, TCD, embolus detection, echocardiography, paediatric neurosonology, and operative examinations will be covered by a variety of different hospital departments in the UK. However, this book serves as a useful reference to the full range of conditions where neurosonology may have a role.

PETER HUMPHREY

Neurological Surgery. Fourth Edition. 5 Volume Set. Editor in Chief JULIAN R YOUNG. (Pp 585-00 HB.) Published by W B Saunders Co, London 1995. ISBN (5 Volume Set) 0-7216-5141-0.

This is one of the best known and used reference works in neurological surgery. It has been a pleasure to review and although I have not read each volume from cover to cover, I have used the text for advice and a second opinion on cases I have dealt with over the past few months. It has also been used by trainees in the department whose opinions have been equally complimentary. The book is amply illustrated with radiological images which have been well chosen and are reproduced with great clarity. The histological photomicrographs are less clear, mainly because they are in black and white and their relevance outside a pathological textbook is questionable.

Despite the pace at which new information is becoming available there is still an important place in neurological surgery for a large reference book that gathers together the views and experience of some of the most experienced practitioners in the field. All textbooks of this type run the risk of becoming obsolete before they are published and although there is much that is changing in neurological surgery there is also a great deal of background information and shared experience that will remain as the foundations of neurosurgical practice for many years. Whilst keeping an open mind and preparedness to change we should also be wary of too readily forgetting the lessons learned by those who have pioneered much that we now take for granted. We should learn by other people's mistakes and take care not to reinvent too many wheels. Out of approximately 340 contributors 12 are from Europe (two from the UK), seven from other parts of the world, and the rest are from the USA and Canada and so this textbook has a strong North American bias. This reflects the reality of contemporary neurosurgery where much of the innovative work is carried out in the United States. This arises because plentiful resources and superspecialisation allows for the concentration of rare and uncommon conditions in major centres which gives unrivalled opportunities for audit, research and development.

The sections of the book I have read in detail contain information which is for the most part up to date and relevant. Many of the authors have opinions which correspond to my own. Whether this reflects on the adequacy of training in the UK or is merely evidence of a closed mind is debatable. At £580 this reference work is remarkably good value, especially when compared with the price of other textbooks in specialised fields. Not only should all neurosurgical departments have a copy for their trainees but I suspect many consultants will wish to have a copy for their own personal use.

RODNEY LAING

Clinical Diagnosis and Management of Alzheimer's Disease. By SERGE GAUTHIER. (Pp 384; £69.95.) Published by Martin Dunitz Publishers, London 1996. ISBN 1-85317-308-8.

With an increasingly aged population, the social and economic impact of Alzheimer's disease on society becomes more apparent. This multiauthor one-volume text aims to provide an overview of recent scientific and clinical advances in our knowledge of this condition, although focusing on clinical diagnosis and management. The largely north American authorship comprises geriatricians, neurologists, psychiatrists, and psychologists.

It should be remembered that a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease can only be made histopathologically. By contrast, most in vivo studies are of dementia of Alzheimer type (DAT), which is a clinical diagnosis made on the basis of diagnostic criteria. These criteria are discussed in the introductory section, as are the pathological features.

Next, there is a detailed section on diagnosis. The chapter on clinical features is excellent, as is the one on clinical pointers to non-Alzheimer's disease forms of dementia, although the latter is limited in length. Investigations are then discussed. While formal neuropsychology and structural imaging are clinically indicated, functional imaging and electrophysiology are currently of research interest.

The natural evolution section discusses prognostic factors and how to stage the illness. The typical patterns of deterioration of cognition, mood, and behaviour and functional autonomy are also covered.

Psychopharmacology of Alzheimer's disease is covered in four chapters, ranging from antipsychotics, agents aiming at improving cognition, to those which attempt to halt or slow the disease. There are also sections on community and institutional management, and ethical and legal issues.

This text is a comprehensive one-volume account of Alzheimer's disease. Despite being multiauthor and multidisciplinary, it is well edited and has a uniformity of approach. It is broad in its scope, and each chapter is extensively referenced. Given that it is a textbook on Alzheimer's disease rather than the dementias, the brevity of the chapter on non-Alzheimer's disease dementias cannot be taken as a fault.

It would be wrong to criticise a book for not being something it did not set out to be. However, clinicians may wonder whether a textbook covering all the dementias, such as *Dementia* by Burns and Levy, might not be more appropriate to their needs.

JOHN GREENE