cerebral palsy as a general guide to normal motor development.

GEoffrey Rushworth


It is hard to judge the purpose of this book. It begins with a five-page review of the concepts of generalized and centrencephalic epilepsy, but the main bulk of the book is a review of 300 'almost consecutive' patients with epilepsy from the electroencephalographic laboratory of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, whose electroencephalogram showed generalized paroxysmal activity. Cases of hypsarrhythmia and cases with generalized abnormalities such as follow cardiac arrest were excluded. The author admits that the material does not represent a homogeneous group either clinically or electroencephalographically, and attempts to separate his cases into, among other groups, a group of 'pure culture idiopathic seizure disorders', and another of 'common generalized epilepsy atypical form'. The distinction between the groups was 'prompted by the presence of mild signs of acquired brain discare in the history...'. Minor focal features in the EEG were also reasons for listing patients in the second group. An account of the EEGs of these somewhat arbitrarily divided groups is then followed by a discussion which is probably useful, though marred by some linguistic inelicities—for example, 'What genetic counseling has strictly to avoid is marrying a partner who is likely to carry certain epileptic genes', and 'While the genetic factor is extremely elusive, the factor of age indicates the zenith and nadir of the generalized epilepsies in longitudinal view'. The publisher's editor must share some responsibility for letting such fulgurious statements adumbrate our understanding.

Anthony Hopkins


This book describes research in neurochemistry done by the authors during the last 10 years; it is practically a collection of research papers, translated from the original Czech and slightly shortened. To me (a neurophysiologist, not a neurochemist) the experiments seem well-designed and the inferences usually fair, though occasionally stated with more generality than the experiments support. The book is well-written in detail, but not well organized as a whole.

* Price not stated.

Non-expert readers will not easily see how its content is related to neurophysiology as a whole, or even to other aspects of neurochemistry.

G. S. BRindley


This book is basically about neuroanatomy, including histology, electron microscopy, and tissue culture. There are brief accounts of neurochemistry and electrophysiology and psychobiology, together with a chapter on the cybernetic approach to brain function. There are many good and original line diagrams but there are also many two-tone reproductions of brain sections which although well reproduced and clearly labelled are of somewhat limited value. The whole book is on sensible non-gloss paper which nonetheless takes all the illustrations adequately. The team of authors seems unduly large for the scope and level of the book, and inevitably the depth and style varies somewhat between them. At the student level for which the book is intended it relates to the North American scene; in the present climate of opinion about anatomy teaching in Britain it would be likely to be considered too complex. But for honours science students, and those working in the wide range of neurosciences, it would be a useful introduction.

Bryan Jennett


Two volumes of the Handbook are devoted to the vascular diseases of the nervous system (including the spinal cord). Many contributions are splendid and provide extremely valuable accounts of the anatomy and traditional clinical disorders of the cerebrospinal vasculature. Unfortunately, the work has an old-fashioned air about it. The recent major advances in knowledge about cerebral blood flow are not adequately dealt with, and one searches in vain for an appreciation of the importance of 'watersheds' in the localization of ischaemic lesions. The account of hypertensive encephalopathy is very good, but other contributions on the role of 'functional' disorders of the vasculature as determinants of apoplexy appear to be expressions of opinion rather than presentation of evidence. The two large volumes could be reduced considerably by judicious editing, as some items are duplicated. The section on EEG aspects is certainly excessive.
In pointing out items which appear to have been missed, the reviewer must observe that he has not read both volumes from cover to cover. But this indicates the most serious criticism. A handbook is intended for reference purposes and this is impossible without a comprehensive index and good cross-references. The index is inadequate and cross-references nonexistent.

J. A. SIMPSON

PROGRESS IN NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY Edited by H. Krayenbuhl, P. E. Masper, and W. H. Sweet. (Pp. 498; illustrated; £18-75.) Karger: Basel. 1971. As advances in knowledge are reported in an ever increasing range of journals the value of the review article increases, provided the reviewer really does cover the field rather than summarize his own work. The preface to this book indicates that authors were clearly instructed to review the literature as well as their own experience and this they have faithfully done. The book, which is the fourth in the series, deals with surgically treatable congenital lesions of the central nervous system and the contributors are from North America (six), Europe (six), and New Zealand. A particular value of the book is the access it gives to work not readily available in English language journals—none of the European contributors is British or Scandinavian. Half the chapters deal with cranial and half with spinal conditions—
including the use of angiography for estimating ventricular size in infants and in diagnosing spinal arteriovenous malformations; myelomingingocele, diastematomyelia, spondylolisthesis, dermal sinuses (cranial and spinal), intracranial arachnoid cysts, and of course, hydrocephalus. As many of the conditions described are relatively uncommon, it is useful to have the literature so fully reviewed in one place. The book is beautifully produced but far too lavishly illustrated. A more critical attitude to the real value of the illustrations in advancing the argument might have enabled a more economical production. Previous volumes have cost, in Swiss francs, 64 (1966), 85 (1968), 95 (1969); this one costs 175 Swiss francs (£18-75), which represents exponential inflation. Maybe doctors in the Common Market can afford this, but in Britain even libraries will find this a steep price.

BRYAN JENNETT


Dr. Holt writes on the quality of survival, summarizing historical trends in maternal and child health and putting existing problems into perspective. He writes not just as a paediatrician and postulates how quality of survival might be altered given the necessary effort. The language is precise, informative, and articulate. My sole complaint is that this paper should have been half again as long.

Dr. Sheila Hewett discusses ‘the need for long-term care’. Her straightforward, warm-hearted and