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Book reviews

THE CHOROID PLEXUS IN HEALTH AND DISEASE By Martin G. Netsky, Samruay Shuangshoti and collaborators. (Pp., 351; illustrated; £20.00.) Wright: Bristol. 1975.

The first comprehensive analysis of the choroid plexus in the English language, this is an important book. The link between function and structure is clarified by the method of detecting by ultramicroscopy the enzymatic activity of horseradish peroxidase which can traverse extracellular avenues closed to the larger protein probes. The first part of the book is an excellent account of the normal choroid plexus. The second part, on the choroid plexus in disease, is likely to be equally unfamiliar to clinicians. Both parts are worth reading. The numerous beautiful electronmicrographs inevitably cost a lot, but the book is a major landmark in an unfamiliar field of neurology.

J. A. SIMPSON

NEUROLOGIE, VOL. 14 POLYNEUROPATHIEN By E. Sluga. (Pp. 155; illustrated; DM 48.) Springer: Berlin. 1974.

Peripheral nerve biopsies from 80 patients were studied by light microscopy, fibre measurements and counts, and, most exhaustively, electron microscopy. Inflammatory neuritis and the Guillain-Barré syndrome were apparently excluded; 32 suffered from Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease and related conditions, 12 from diabetes, seven from non-metastatic complications of carcinoma, five from uraemia, four from alcoholism, and 11 had no clinical diagnosis. Neurophysiological studies were not included in the text.

The author feels confident in separating axonal (54%) from demyelinating neuropathy (38%), in all but five cases who had both, as a result of vascular lesions. The electron microscopic findings are well-illustrated and described meticulously; more than half the manuscript is a review of the world literature.

The only consistent finding relative to a clinical syndrome was an axonal lesion of unmyelinated fibres in familial sensory neuropathy. Axonal neuropathy of myelinated fibres is split into disintegrative and dystrophic forms, the latter in the more chronic conditions. The author confirms occurrence of hypertrophic changes after demyelination from a variety of causes. Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease would seem to be the nigger in the woodpile of her classification, but her labours should hasten the day when the clinician may resort to nerve biopsy in some hope of enlightenment.

E. H. JELLINEK

BIOCHEMISTRY OF NEURAL DISEASE By Maynard M. Cohen. (Pp., 254; $22.50.) Harper and Row: Maryland. 1975.

This small book contains a number of articles by seven contributors. Disorders of amino acid metabolism, carbohydrates, lipids, and nutrition of the nervous system are described together with a basic biochemical background. However, other chapters cover the biochemistry from the viewpoint of the disease, neurological and psychiatric, and as a result there is some duplication without cross-references (neurochemical alterations in ischaemia, biochemistry of tumours, etc.). Because of the division of approach the book lacks an overall connecting theme.

Unfortunately too, some contributors refer predominantly to the older literature—for example, only three out of 37 references after 1970 in the first chapter. In the section on Huntington's chorea, deficiency in glutamate decarboxylase is not mentioned. On myasthenia gravis work on haplotypes and antibodies is not cited, and the important model of the disease induced by the cholinergic receptor protein in 1974 is not discussed.

It is, of course, easy to criticize concise books covering so broad a field, and with reservations the book should be useful to busy neurologists.

A. N. DAVISON

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF NORMAL AND DISEASED MUSCLE AND PERIPHERAL NERVE Edited by I. Hausmanowa-Petrusewicz and H. Jedrzajowska. (Pp. 394; illustrated; zL 150.) Polish Medical Publishers: Warsaw. 1974.

This well-produced volume contains upwards of 60 papers presented at a Symposium on Muscle and Nerve held in Poland in May 1972. As is usual at symposia, the standard of presentation varies considerably, but there is no doubt that most people interested in the neuropathies and myopathies will be able to find some personal gold dust. The interests of molecular biologists, biochemists, morphologists, neurophysiologists, and clinicians are fairly equally represented and cover topics as disparate as the histochemical changes in compensatory muscle hypertrophy, neuromuscular excitability in brucellosis, abnormalities of the sarcoplasmic reticulum in myopathies, and a fascinating ultrastructural study of light meromyosin crystal aggregates.

The reader should seek an opportunity to browse through this volume in the library.

D. G. F. HARRIMAN

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