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Book reviews

SURGICAL DISORDERS OF THE PERIPHERAL NERVES By Sir Herbert Seddon. (Pp. 336; illustrated; £12.00.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1975.

A second edition in three years is sufficient testimony to the value of this outstanding book which is an essential work of reference for all who have to deal with peripheral nerve injuries. The revision includes more modern methods of electrodiagnosis but omits important data on the use of conduction studies for prognosis and monitoring of recovery, and of electromyography in detecting anomalous innervation, trick movements and aberrant regeneration. Modern immunology is just beginning to influence the use of homografts. Entrapment syndromes receive a wider coverage but important 'medical' causes are omitted. The new knowledge about tourniquet paralysis receives only passing reference. These points may indicate the desirability of greater cooperation between orthopaedic surgeon, physician, and clinical physiologist to increase diagnostic precision. For the management of nerve injuries there is no better guide than this splendid book, because the author has the courage to describe his own doubts or occasional errors, so that this is more than a survey of recent publications. It is the recorded experience of the most distinguished surgeon in this field.

J. A. SIMPSON

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM Edited by C. Eyzaguirre and S. J. Fidone. (Pp. 418; illustrated; £10.75.) Lloyd Luke: London. 1975.

In this second edition Dr Eyzaguirre has been joined by Salvatore J. Fidone as co-author and a number of collaborators have contributed to specific sections. Although some expansion of the original text has taken place, the original intention to present an outline of the principles of neurophysiology in a form suitable both for first year medical students, and for graduates and more advanced workers has been adhered to.

The book remains an admirably clear account of the subject. It is inevitable that a book of this size must be selective and, although the sections on general neurophysiology and sensation are reasonably comprehensive, the most extensive treatment is given to the section on reflexes and the control of movement and posture. There are interesting sections on the autonomic system, sleep, denervation and trophic phenomena, but relatively little is said regarding such higher functions of the brain as speech, learning and behaviour. The text is outstandingly lucid and the book is clearly printed with clear and helpful line diagrams. Each chapter has a short list of references at the end but it seems a pity that references are not cited in the text as many who read this book will wish to go back to original sources.

Taken as a whole, the book can be warmly recommended as an introductory text for students, and many clinical workers will be glad to have access to it as an exceptionally clear account of the fundamentals of neurophysiology.

J. A. R. LENMAN

LURIA'S NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION By Anne-Lise Christensen. (Pp.: text 201, manual 53; 158 test cards; illustrated; £6.90; £2.75; £10.) Munksgaard: Copenhagen. 1975.

Having had an interest in Luria's theory of speech and its disorders, I welcomed Anne-Lise Christensen's description of his neuropsychological investigation. It consists of a 200 page text describing the technique and a reprint of Luria's account of the underlying philosophy. It includes a method for the analysis of the results to enable the user to ascribe specific anatomical sites for a lesion, based upon the functional deficit. There is a manual for administering the tests and a pack containing the necessary items.

At an early stage in the investigation a formal identification of cerebral dominance is required. The intracarotid amytal test is recommended and it is pointed out that this can only be done in a neurosurgical unit. In such a setting, an elaborate theoretical analysis of anatomical localization may seem inappropriate and perhaps less reliable than one derived from conventional neurophysiology and neuroradiology.

The tests themselves are thorough yet otherwise unremarkable. Any competent neurologist faced with a patient suffering from a disorder of the higher functions would perform a similar battery of tests and would reach roughly similar conclusions, although I doubt whether many would be so specific in their anatomical localizations.

If the expert does not need such a method, is it appropriate for the beginner? Dr Christensen's introduction stresses the need for adapting the style and content of the various items according to the patients' intellectual, educational, and pathological