
Scientists have been criticised for a supposed failure to communicate the important implications of their specialised studies to others working in related fields or to highly educated people who would be interested in general trends but not competent to analyse detailed research reports. Professor Russell has written a useful little book for those who require to have some understanding of the function of the brain and the relevance of modern ideas to education and training of young children. The reviewer applauds his comments on this. The two chapters written in collaboration with Dr A. J. Dewar of the MRC Brain Metabolism Unit, Edinburgh, give a clear account of the ‘chemistry of learning’ and of the action of drugs on the brain. An idiosyncratic aspect is Professor Russell’s advocacy for the existence of two separate minds in some people, one caring for monotonous, undemanding work and the other more imaginative and each with different ethical standards. As would be expected, he has interesting things to say about memory and pain. His views are already well known to neurologists but this valuable little book will stimulate many who work on the fringe of neurology. This is an enjoyable book to read.

J. A. SIMPSON


Any book which sets out to describe pathological mechanisms behind clinical disorders can easily become a catalogue of hypotheses, claims, and counter claims in which the new student of neurology and the clinician may find it difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff. In the 13 chapters in this book, the authors have collated current concepts in a simple, readable, and unembellished form, leaving the reader with a clear but uncritical view of the landscape. For that reason, the academic neurologist will find it unsatisfactory and possibly naïve. It is, however, aimed primarily at the medical student and those who teach undergraduates, for whom it provides in a single, fairly small volume, information that is not available in general textbooks of neurology, and can be found only with difficulty elsewhere.

Although the book is by no means comprehensive in its coverage, it is easy to read, and for the experienced neurologist will perhaps merely serve to refresh the memory. For the medical student it will be most valuable if read in conjunction with the textbook of clinical neurology.

I consider this is a worthwhile little book which at present day prices represents good value for money.

J. P. BALLANTYNE


This lucidly written and very readable book deals with the principles of interpretation of pertechnetate scintencephalograms, and of scinticisternograms. It deals with the subjects from a clinical viewpoint and there is little discussion of apparatus or of radiopharmaceuticals.

The relevant anatomy and physiology, the effects of projection and positioning, and the normal appearances are first described. Then the various types of abnormalities which may be revealed are discussed, followed by more detailed consideration of specific lesions. In each of the latter, relevant aspects of neuropathology and pathophysiology are described, and the results of gamma encephalography are integrated with the clinical and with other neuroradiological studies, with the most important exception of computed axial tomography, which is making isotope studies redundant in many conditions. However, the values and limitations of carefully performed scanning are clearly brought out.

The illustrations of static scintencephalograms and of sequential studies are excellent, and the detailed captions make the book a useful atlas. Unfortunately, the illustrations of some of the angiograms and plain films are not as good, but they are adequate to show the lesions being described. The illustrations are grouped at the end of each chapter, which makes them inconvenient for immediate reference at the time of reading the text. There is a useful up-to-date analysis of the literature with extensive references. The book is recommended to neuroscientists, general radiologists, and nuclear physicians interested in this field.

BRIAN KENDALL


The title of this book is perhaps slightly misleading in that it might imply that it contained basic clinical neurological observations. In fact the book is devoted to basic anatomy and physiology of the nervous system. The coverage is very wide as indicated by 19 chapters contained within 430 pages of text. In the circumstances it is impossible to review the subject in depth, and indeed the coverage has been achieved by the presentation of data in a simple and generally uncritical manner. However, since this book is presumably directed
at medical students then these limitations are acceptable. There is a very useful list of references at the end of each chapter and also a summary of the contents of each chapter contained in one to two pages. The summary is unnecessary as each chapter itself is something of a summary of present knowledge in the field. The book is beautifully and copiously illustrated. The diagrams are clear, concise, and easily assimilable. This volume is well written and achieves its object of summarising neuro-anatomy and neuro-physiology as pertinent to basic training in clinical neurology. I think it will be of value to medical students in training. I doubt if postgraduate neurology students would find much new information in it.

J. P. BALLANTYNE


In 1974 the subject chosen for the Annual Cancer Symposium at the Fox Chase Cancer Center, Philadelphia, was tumours of the nervous system. This is the proceedings. The title is a little misleading, half the book being about pituitary tumours. This is also the best half, with Simon Kramer, Glenn Sheline, and others discussing the advantages and disadvantages of radiotherapy, without surgery, as the initial treatment of choice; and Kjellberg giving the benefit of his unrivalled experience of proton beam therapy.

For medulloblastoma, John Mullen of Chicago advocates preoperative shunting and minimal surgery, before proceeding to radiotherapy.

At the end of each section the neurosurgeons and radiotherapists at the meeting debated the various problems that had been raised. Publication of such discussion adds further interest to a well-produced text.

THURSTAN B. BREWIN


In the rapidly expanding field of clinical neurophysiology with its new techniques, concepts, and, of course, controversy, it is no mean task to attempt to cover the basic principles in a book of only 300 pages. By excluding material that is not of immediate relevance to the practising clinician, by dispensing with redundant prose and by using illustrations only where they are pertinent to understanding of the subject, Dr Lenman has succeeded in producing a clear and adequate account of the physiology of the nervous system.

The book is primarily of interest to the clinical neurologist who can refresh his knowledge of those aspects of neurophysiology in which he may not have a primary interest but can be read with benefit by the undergraduate who has completed the pre-clinical course. At the end of each chapter is to be found a useful list of key references for those who wish to explore the subject in greater depth.

I have no serious criticisms of this book which I found enjoyable to read and can recommend it without reservation.

J. P. BALLANTYNE


It is a truism that there is no direct relation between the importance of a subject and the research effort put into it. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the field of brain disease in old age, which is a most significant cause of disability in the general population, and yet has until relatively recently attracted little attention from pathologists, physicians, and psychiatrists. Understanding of the pathological processes involved is limited, and management difficult. These two volumes are accounts of meetings of American societies interested in aging and in neurosciences held in 1974. They thus review at least part of the present state of knowledge.

The first volume is the product of a meeting of the American Aging Association. It contains eight papers on the pathology and chemistry of the developing and aging brain. Two are of considerable interest, the first by Scheibel and Scheibel on structural changes, in which the possible significance of neurofibrillary tangles as a cause of loss of dendrites in cortical neurons is stressed, the second by Brizzee and others, in which the accumulation and distribution in the aging nervous system of lipofuscin, amyloid, and senile plaques is reviewed. The other contributions mainly concern the neurochemistry of aging, a field still awaiting illumination.

The second volume derives from a meeting of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology. Two contributions deal with psychological aspects of the aging brain, two with the cerebral