
This is the second in a two volume publication on the receptors and mode of action of steroid hormones. Part I dealt with the general concept of intracellular cytoplasmic proteins as receptors for steroid hormones with the isolation of these receptor proteins and, finally, with oestrogen and androgens as examples. The present volume continues with the glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids followed by the applicability of these ideas in assessing the degree of hormone dependence of breast cancer and, finally, the regulatory role of steroid hormone receptors in the brain.

The five chapters are essentially separate essays with little evidence of overall editorial supervision. For example, chapter 8 gives 40 pages of references and full titles, whereas the remaining chapters content themselves with author and journal, and a corresponding reduction in space.

Nevertheless, the subject matter is highly topical, and in breast cancer an important essay gives a clear description of our knowledge in these areas with extensive references to the relevant literature up to 1974/75. The book is essentially aimed, if not at the specialist, at least at those who have special reason for interest in these steroid hormones and to those the volume can be recommended.

J. S. GILLESPIE

Neurological Development in Infancy

This book is the result of a detailed and systematic study of neurological development in 51 normal infants. Each infant was examined at home by the author every four weeks until the stage of independent walking. At each visit Dr Touwen recorded the developmental stage of each of an extensive battery of test items. By simple graphical display and more complex statistical methods, he now presents the mode of development of each of these items and their interrelationships. Items which did not develop after birth or which showed a very rapid developmental course in early infancy are presumed to depend on early maturing neurological systems and such test items are suitable for inclusion in neurological examinations in infancy. A large number of other items showed a clear developmental sequence with an initial and final change during the study period and an appreciable developmental range. The details of many of these sequences are of great interest to neurologists. Of particular note is the development of voluntary grasping, in the course of which Dr Touwen has noted an upsetting, but fortunately brief, phase of index finger pointing or 'tipping' in which the infant cannot pick up a small object, manifest between the stages of inferior pincer and mature pincer grasping. This tipping is thought to signal the linking of cortical and non-cortical mechanisms which have been maturing independently. Other studies of the relationships between the developing items bring some surprises—for instance, the dissolution of the palmar grasp reflex is not a straightforward prerequisite for the development of voluntary grasping. Regarding the assessment of development, this book does not of course contain a set of normative data but it points to the pitfalls of assessment and demonstrates soundly the variability between infants and between aspects of development in the same infant, and shows convincingly that single examinations are inadequate for neurological or developmental assessment in infancy. As a basis for further understanding and research into infant development, it is essential reading.

J. B. P. STEPHENSON


It is a special pleasure to review the proceedings of the IBRO symposium on fever and the developing brain which was held in Toronto in the fall of 1975 as a satellite to the First International Congress of Child Neurology. Unlike many large international gatherings it was an exciting and human meeting, and this well-knit book reflects and focusses that excitement. The problem posed is why millions of the world's children develop febrile convulsions with fever, and why certain of them have devastating neurological sequelae; the aim is the prevention of the latter, if not the former. Opening chapters illustrate cerebral microdevelopment, and the development of monoaminergic, cholinergic, and prostaglandin systems. Thermoregulation and mechanisms of fever production (and prevention) are discussed in detail. On the clinical side, the pathology of febrile convulsions (Meldrum), seizure duration in the genesis of neurological sequelae (Aicardi 'and Chevrie), and the ante-
Acupuncture Anesthesia in the People's Republic of China (Pp. 73; $5.75.)

Recurrently, the Western world discovers China; and whenever this happens, they turn to each other and say 'How amazing! The Chinese treat disease by just digging needles in'. A short and interesting report of this repeated awareness of acupuncture was written by McMenemey as an editorial for the British Medical Journal (22 December 1973). Let us hope that the present interest in acupuncture has come to stay. The amount of research now being undertaken in the United States into the interactions of different inputs from various parts of the body is starting to be rewarding; and that is what acupuncture analgesia is all about.

The short pamphlet being reviewed here is a report of a group of North American neurologists, neurophysiologists, and anaesthetists who visited China to observe operations being done under acupuncture analgesia. It does not concern other aspects of acupuncture, such as the treatment of chronic painful conditions or various diseases. This short report has taken two years to come out, and so most of the information in it is now out-of-date.

Apparantly well-planned research on the physiology of acupuncture analgesia is used instead of general anaesthesia going on in China. It has not yet been established what peripheral receptors are involved, nor what the central mechanisms are. The American visiting group reported that 'the techniques being employed are generally comparable to those being applied to the problem of pain in research centers in the West and the Chinese investigators were fully cognisant of the problems and current status of research on neurophysiology of pain'.

For acupuncture analgesia, the choice of points was not standardized. The group reported that 'an operation might be performed with needles inserted into the extremities or the lumbo-sacral region in one hospital and the same operation performed in another hospital with needles inserted in totally different sites, such as the pinna of the ear'. The needles were usually inserted into the underlying muscle mass; and the muscles were always contracting repetitively. Electric stimulation of the needles was used; the pulse duration 0.1 ms, voltage 0.25 to 48 V, and the rate started off at about 3 Hz and was then increased up to 50 Hz; some acupuncturists increased it to 200 Hz. Acupuncture analgesia was not used on children under the age of 15 years.

Those who read this pamphlet will be left in the same mental state as I think the visiting group was left in, and which was well put to me by one of a group of Danish doctors who studied acupuncture in China. 'When I went to China I was confused. And when I left, I was still confused. But at a higher level'.

P. W. NATHAN

Conceived by the late Stephen Krauss, psychiatrist and philosopher, this volume aims, 'in the best tradition of Encyclopaedists from Diderot to the present day, to bring together... articles which, when taken together, would mirror the face of psychological medicine as it exists today. Among the days of Diderot are long since past—even the three-volume Encyclopaedia of Psychology (1727) does not succeed in covering the whole of a narrower field—and the direction 'take together' is one which can hardly be filled for 573 pages of articles from Accident Proneness to Yoga Therapy.

The collection ranges from authoritative distillations of standard topics in psychiatry—for example, Anxiety by Lader; Developmental Dysphasia by Espir and Rose; Intelligence by Vernon; Skill by Welford, and many others—to idiosyncratic articles, presumably by Krauss's acquaintances, on topics of their choice—for example, Artistic Experience by Helen Rosenau, Economic Behaviour by Hultman, Folklore by Seguin, Hope by Stotland, Speech and Reason by Abse—which give rise to some odd juxtapositions, such as Child Guidance Clinics (Adlerian) followed by Child Guidance Clinics (Great Britain), and include the entertaining suggestion by Allen that preventive measures for sexual deviations include 'weaning after breast feeding at the proper time, normal feeding with hard biscuits to bite, and no excessive interest in the bowels by the parents'.

Between these extremes lie summaries by authorities which are inadequate—for example, half a page on Autistic Children by Wing—and others which are (predictably) biased—for example, Child Development by Anna Freud (which is, however, compensated for by a masterly view of Life-span Psychology by Charlotte Bühler). These considerably diminish any interest, or use, which the volume might have, a diminution which is emphasised by numerous omissions from the 'face of psychological medicine as it exists today'. For instance, does a neurologist want to find out something about abreaction? He will not find it here; nor anything on dreaming; nor will the psychiatrist find any account of the various aspects of psychopharmacology, save a description of hallucinogens by Buckman.

The most interesting articles in the book are the unexpected excursions—Abercrombie on Psychological Aspects of Architecture, Taylor on Environmental Factors, three articles on Culture and Society, to name but a few. It would perhaps have been better to expand these into a Festschrift for Krauss, rather than to have persevered with this very uneven patchwork.

J. B. P. STEPHENSON

Acupuncture Anesthesia (Pp. 01; 5.00.)

Acupuncture, the ancient Chinese technique for relieving pain by needling specific points on the body, has been largely ignored in the West. This book is a timely reminder that acupuncture still has a place in the treatment of certain conditions, such as post-operative pain and chronic headaches.

Acupuncture is based on the belief that the body has an energy system known as the 'meridians'. Acupuncture points are thought to correspond to these meridians, and by stimulating them, acupuncture is believed to restore the body's balance and restore normal function.

The book provides an overview of acupuncture's history, its principles, and its techniques. It also discusses the various conditions that acupuncture can be used to treat, including pain management, digestive disorders, and respiratory conditions.

Overall, Acupuncture Anesthesia is a useful resource for those interested in exploring acupuncture as a treatment option. It provides a solid foundation for further study and research in this area.