

Self-Assessment of Current Knowledge in Neurology. 1056 Multiple Choice Questions and Referenced Answers

Second Edition. By R. D. Currier, A. F. Haerer, J. Bebin, G. R. Hogan, and G. Gatipon. (Pp. 137; \$10.00.) Medical Examination Publishing Co.: Flushing, New York. 1975.

This small book is a distillate of the significant and worthwhile in a decade of neurological writing. By turning their anthology into a thousand questions the authors have prepared a manual and a catechism for the seven ages of neurology. Beneath the brash exterior readers will find good neurology and sound advice. Most of the questions are clinical. The data on which they are constructed come from original papers and from textbooks, all fully referenced. Questions on the basic neurosciences are likely to tax the most erudite clinician, and sometimes his laboratory colleague, but the neuroradiology is less exacting. Unexpected omissions are to some extent due to the distant publication date in the US of November 1975. They include non-appearance of sodium valproate, computerised axial tomography, and muscle receptor-protein blockade.

The book has many uses besides its advertised purpose. Beyond the present reach of the aspirant and the apprentice to neurology it does not burke the enormity of the task ahead and encourages their interest with scattered chestnuts the answers to which they learned in sixth form and medical school. For the journeyman years of the registrar it serves first as a series of test papers which could hardly be bettered and, after Membership, as a compendium of the literature when he is reading and writing. The newly-arrived neurologist and his rusting senior colleague are perhaps the book's greatest beneficiaries. For them it is at once a source book of half-remembered truth, a digest of less familiar fields of study and research and, most importantly, a check on presumed infallibility. Emeritus readers, both those who are active and those who are quite retired, will find, *rallentando*, an evening's pleasure in recalling past triumphs and moments of diagnostic wizardry. All readers will be rewarded by writing out their own index.

C. WELLS

Grinker's Neurology By Nicholas A. Vick. (Pp. 1086; illustrated; \$43.50.) Charles C. Thomas: Springfield, Illinois. 1976.

This is the seventh edition of Grinker's Neurology, and it has been extensively rewritten and many new references added to keep the book as up-to-date as is possible in a textbook of this size. The author has not attempted to cover the entire field of the neurological sciences but has concentrated the entire volume on the field of clinical neurology. The first 100 pages of the book are devoted to a thorough step-by-step description of the neurological examination with a well illustrated review of the special investigations currently available to the clinical neurologist. The book is extremely well illustrated and the quality of the illustration is quite superb. For example, in the chapter on brain stem and cranial nerve nuclei, the copious illustrations and photographs along with the lucid text on applied anatomy and physiology with particular reference to pathology affecting these structures is particularly valuable.

I have no major criticisms to make of any part of the book. Of course it is no longer possible in any one textbook to cover every aspect of clinical neurology, but should the reader be disappointed in finding less information in the text than he might wish, then the excellent bibliography will indicate the path to further enlightenment. I like the style of this book as it is straightforward and easy to read. While not particularly cheap, I would consider it good value for money. By the nature of its design, this book will be of value to established clinical neurologists but also to those who are just entering the speciality. It can be recommended.

J. P. BALLANTYNE

The Nervous System. Vol. 1 The Basic Neurosciences Editor-in-Chief D. B. Tower, Volume Editor Roscoe O'Brady. (Pp. Lxii+685; illustrated; price not stated.) Raven Press: New York. 1975. The 25th Anniversary of the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke of the USA in 1975 was commemorated by three volumes reviewing the advances in the science and practice of neurology during the quarter century, with special

emphasis on the contributions of staff and grantees of the Institute. At the beginning of the epoch it was possible for a well read neurologist to be familiar with the basic sciences of his speciality. Anatomy seemed to be complete and neurophysiology could be contained in one volume. Biochemistry had hardly touched neurology. Even a superficial scan of the first volume is enough to show that this is no longer true and the clinician requires concise reviews of the neurosciences to keep in touch. *The Basic Neurosciences* is a splendid survey, putting personal contributions into a wider context and usually with the clinical relevance underlined. As there are 63 chapters it is impossible to comment on each. They are grouped under headings: Structural organisation of excitable systems; Synthetic machinery and axoplasmic transport; Physiological organisation of excitable systems, nerve, muscle and synapse; Systems, physiology-morphology; Blood brain barrier systems; Neuropharmacology; Biochemical approaches to cellular neurobiology; Biochemistry of learning and memory; Developmental neurobiology; Neuroimmunology; Behaviour. The authors are all well known in their fields.

This is an exciting book to read. For the young neurologist looking for an interest to last a lifetime, here are the exciting new ideas. If only British clinical neurology could provide its young men with the scientific back-up and, more importantly, the time to join their American colleagues! The study of disease need not be entirely at the bedside, UMTs notwithstanding.

J. A. SIMPSON

Drug Interactions and Their Mechanisms By I. Stockley. (Pp. 78; illustrated; £1.00.) The Pharmaceutical Press: London. 1975.

This is a valuable pamphlet which consists of 11 articles on the topic of drug interactions by Ivan Stockley, first published in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*. It deals with general principles and specific problems from all fields of medicine. Of interest to the neurologist are the section on anticonvulsants, and those on psychoactive drugs. Perhaps it will best be used as a reference source of information, for it is detailed and excellently referenced.

C. D. MARSDEN