

An Atlas of Tumours Involving the Central Nervous System By Robin O. Barnard, Valentine Logue, and Patterson S. Reaves. (Pp. 158; illustrated; £16.50.) Baillière Tindall: London, 1976.

This attractively presented and abundantly illustrated monograph is the result of collaboration between a neuropathologist and two neurosurgeons. The book starts with a description of the normal cells of the central nervous system, and this is followed by a relatively simple classification of neuro-epithelial tumours which is sensible and practical and will appeal to surgeons and pathologists alike. A simple grading system is described (with particular reference to astrocytoma) with a useful reminder that this is of very limited value when applied to needle biopsies.

The section on classification is followed by a series of examples of different tumours, preceded in each case by a summary of the histological features, and a note on the behaviour of the tumour. The examples are set out in the form of case histories, complete with operation findings and progress notes, followed by a fairly brief histological description, illustrated on the facing page by colour plates. These coloured pictures include not only the familiar H and E stain, but also a considerable range of the special stains which neuropathologists find useful in the histological diagnosis of brain tumours. In such a beautifully presented book, it seems churlish to complain about the standard of the pictures, but it is unfortunately the case that, while many of the illustrations are excellent, in others the colours appear very badly reproduced, to such an extent that one wonders whether black and white pictures would not sometimes have been crisper and more informative. It also seems a pity that the authors did not take the opportunity to include a few diagnostic brain smears stained by the popular toluidine blue method which is described in the short, but useful chapter on technical methods.

However, the authors, themselves point out in the preface that their main intention has been to emphasise clinicopathological correlation and thus help the reader to understand and remember the features of particular tumours, and to this end they have, as it were, played down the more technical aspects.

The result is a most attractive and readable book which may well prove to be more acceptable and useful to clinicians than any of the standard comprehensive texts on brain tumours which are currently available.

BETTY BROWNELL

Fundamentals of Sensorineural Auditory Pathology By William B. Dublin. (Pp. 229; illustrated; \$22.00.) Charles C. Thomas: Springfield, Illinois, 1976.

This book is an attempt to discuss auditory pathology in terms of the whole auditory pathway and not merely to describe changes in the inner ear. In this it succeeds at least in part. The title is, however, a little misleading as rather more than half the volume is devoted to a description of the normal.

The first chapter concerns methods of preparation of tissues and is of interest only to the specialist. The next two chapters discuss the development and gross anatomy of the auditory pathways, together with an excellent account of the microscopical structure. The section on the cochlea is well described with good illustrative electronmicrographs, while the remainder of this chapter takes the reader carefully through the maze of the brain stem pathways to the geniculate ganglia and cortex and attempts to correlate certain physiological variables—for example, loudness recruitment, with structure.

The remainder of the book deals with pathological conditions and in this section is rather patchy. As would be expected Dr. Dublin's account of kernicterus is excellent, and subjects such as Ménière's syndrome are reasonably covered for a book of this size. However, the discussion of certain topics is in some cases too cursory—for example, drug effects, and in others too dogmatic—for example, the idea that in multiple sclerosis an antibody to myelin constituents is the cause of demyelination is stated as if it were a fact rather than speculative. The references to the literature are in general well covered and certainly adequate to take the reader further if he so wishes. One striking omission occurs in the discussion of rubella where no mention is made of Gregg; rather like discussing the theory of relativity without mentioning Einstein.

One final adverse criticism concerns the way that the English language is

used by many transatlantic authors. It is irritating in the extreme to read sentences containing many long words when one or two short ones would do and even more annoying to have sentences constructed upside-down—for example, 'The anoxic topistic distribution is maintained microscopically also'.

In summary, the book gives a reasonable account of the normal and abnormal auditory sensory system, but I think few neurologists would find it of interest.

PETER RUDGE

The Cerebral Vessel Wall Edited by J. Cervos-Navarro, E. Betz, F. Matakas, and R. Wullenweber. (Pp. 287; illustrated; \$26.50.) Raven Press: New York, 1976.

This book is based on a 1973 symposium covering anatomical, pathological, and physiological aspects of the cerebral circulation. The control of tone in cerebral blood vessels is one of the most difficult as well as one of the most important current topics in vascular physiology, and the contents of this book reflect the increasing amount of experimental work being carried out on the subject. Perhaps the most interesting aspect is the recent evidence that innervation of the cerebral vessels is more extensive and is functionally more important than was previously supposed. Many of the matters dealt with are still controversial, partly because of species differences. The book will accordingly be of more value to people with research interests in the subject than to the general medical reader. People in the former category will find it essential, and anyone with a special interest in the brain and its blood vessels will find it important and interesting reading.

W. R. KEATINGE

Notice

The 11th Congress of the Collegium Internationale Psychopharmacologicum (CINP) will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 9–14 July 1978. Apply to the Secretarial Office, 11th CINP Congress, c/o Interconvention (POB 35, A-1095 Vienna, Austria (telephone 0222/42 13 52; telex 01-1811)). The final date for preliminary registration is 31 August 1977 and for abstracts 31 October 1977.