

the pial vessels, the development of brain "oedema", and changes in the intracranial and cerebral venous pressures during acute hypertension. Dr Auer, in common with other workers, found that severe induced hypertension causes cerebral arteriolar dilation, an increase in cerebral blood flow and dysfunction of the blood-brain barrier. There is, therefore, increasing, if not conclusive, evidence that forced dilatation and over-distension of the cerebral resistance vessels and cerebral "oedema" formation are the pathophysiological basis of hypertensive encephalopathy.

This treatise contains a useful and informative account of the past and present knowledge in this field, and summarises that clinical significance of the experimental results at the end. It is well illustrated with some coloured figures and cites most of the relevant literature. This book is highly recommended to those with an interest in the microcirculation of the brain.

D. I. GRAHAM

Low Back Disability Neurosurgical, Orthopaedic, and Radiological Symposium Edited by B. R. Selecki. (Pp. 198; illustrated; \$A25.00.) Australasian Medical Publishing: Glebe, NSW. 1978. In 1934 Mixter and Barr, by publishing their classic paper, opened the way to the rational treatment of patients suffering from low back pain and sciatica. Nearly half a century later the syndromes arising as a result of degenerative disease of the lumbar spine can still present difficulty in management. Attitudes of orthopaedic surgeons and neurosurgeons to these problems often differ, and it is in an attempt to unify the clinical approach, as well as to improve our understanding of them that this monograph has been written. The major part of the text is the responsibility of experienced surgeons, particularly interested in spinal disorders who are ably supported by contributions from neurologist, pathologist, and radiologist. There is a wide discussion on all aspects of low back disability ranging from experimental work, through the clinical features, to a comparison of treatment techniques and their results. The radiological chapter is quite outstanding though somewhat marred by the quality of the illustrations. Interesting is the little use made of water soluble contrast myelography

at the time of this symposium when in the United Kingdom it had become quite standard. In the clinical sections there is a wealth of important information the appreciation of which is sometimes difficult because of the design of the plates and tables which accompany the text. These are, however, minor criticisms of what is otherwise a most helpful and interesting presentation of the subject. The conclusions in the final chapter are wholeheartedly endorsed, particularly those concerning the need to train surgeons specially to deal with spinal conditions—unfortunately in my view a concept unlikely to gain wide acceptance, or support, in this country.

J. A. RUSSELL

Regional Cerebral Blood Flow By H. J. Gelmers. (Pp. 96; illustrated; D.fl 60.00.) Van Gorcum: Assen. 1978.

This volume has all the marks of a published thesis. It deals principally with the author's experience of measurement of cerebral blood flow in 64 patients using the methods developed by Lassen and his colleagues in Copenhagen—that is, a multidetector system for extracranial detection of gamma radiation after intracarotid injection of xenon.

The book is sadly out of date—for instance, there are only a handful of references dating after 1975. It might be of mild interest to those using similar methods, but the original papers by Lassen's group and by many other groups would be far more valuable and comprehensive. Unfortunately, there is little of scientific interest or clinical value to either the general reader or the expert in the cerebral circulation.

A. MURRAY HARPER

Sleep Disorders. Diagnosis and Treatment Edited by Robert Williams and Ismet Karacan. (Pp. 417; illustrated; £22.50.) John Wiley and Sons: Chichester. 1978.

This American volume is essentially a "state of the art" review of a number of sleep problems mainly from the point of view of clinicians involved in sleep research. The authors are in the main very eminent in the areas they have chosen to review, and overall it is a credit to the editors that the style is so harmonious although there are surprising omissions in some areas.

The book is divided into three parts:

(1) primary disorders consisting of insomnia, narcolepsy, and sleep apnoea syndromes; (2) secondary sleep disorders—in depressive illnesses and major psychoses including organic brain disease and in most medical and surgical conditions; (3) the use of the sleep laboratory in the investigation and treatment of impotence.

Inevitably, there is a great variability in the quality of the available data leading to some very full review chapters while other chapters consist of limited and recent experiments. However, it is a credit to the authors that the experimental data are explicitly stated so that generalisations are largely avoided. The main effect I found was a feeling of dissatisfaction with the apparent gaps in many areas but this is in its way a stimulant to research. In other ways the book presents a coming of age of sleep research confirming that there are now sufficient basic data of normal sleep to allow research to move towards the clinical fields increasingly. After all many of our patients die in their sleep!

I was particularly pleased to see a chapter discussing the behavioural approach in the treatment of insomnia which, if sufficiently successful on a large scale, would allow alternative hypnotics.

The main snag in the volume is the cost which I think will prevent many individuals from using the book to advantage, but I must commend it to all interested readers.

J. I. EVANS

Tay-Sachs Disease: Screening and Prevention Edited by Michael M. Kaback. (Pp. 433; illustrated; \$45.00.) Alan R. Liss: New York. 1977.

This book contains papers given at the first international conference on Tay-Sachs Disease which was held in 1976 together with the discussions printed verbatim. In scope it ranges from the biochemistry and molecular biology to the religious significance particularly to the Jewish Community. The main emphasis is on the practicalities of heterozygote detection, antenatal diagnosis, and the impact of such programmes on communities and individual families. Experience is related from the United States, Canada, Israel, the UK, and South Africa. The book contains sub-