
This book consists of edited papers originally presented at a meeting on Computed Tomography which took place in Luxembourg in March 1977. The authors use their own material as a basis for discussion of specific subjects, and the book in this way encompasses many of the clinical aspects of computed tomography of the head and trunk. The experience recorded corresponds in general with that previously published, and the book breaks no new ground.

Several of the articles—for example, the chapter by Ungerer on the technology of computed tomography—are good basic reviews, and others such as those on the sellar region and the cerebellopontine angle by Salvolini and his colleagues, are both comprehensive and beautifully illustrated. Unfortunately, the illustrations in some of the other papers are of poor quality, and some subjects are dealt with too briefly to be of much practical value to neuroscientists, although this defect is often compensated for by inclusion of a good selection of references.

Those beginning the study of head and body scanning may find the book a stimulating introduction to the subject, though the overall standard and general coverage are not as satisfactory as those in the proceedings of some previous European seminars on computed tomography.

B. KENDALL


This book is the first of several planned by Dr Lipton for those who are involved in the analysis and management of pain problems. It opens with a brief outline of current views about the anatomical and physiological basis of pain, and most of the remaining chapters deal with physical methods of treatment in some detail with emphasis upon those practised by anaesthetists and surgeons. There is also one chapter on the psychiatric management of pain, one on acupuncture, and one on the role of drug therapy. It is to be hoped that more information will appear in later volumes about the last three areas of work mentioned as they are rapidly expanding. Thus the reader will not find a complete account of all methods available for the analysis and treatment of pain and, having embarked upon the purchase of volume I at just over £100, is likely to have to purchase two or three more to make up the set. The standard of writing varies as expected, but most chapters are well written by acknowledged experts. At a time when many books about pain are coming out on to the market Dr Lipton’s series should find its place as a guide to the pain specialist, but the final judgment must await the appearance of later volumes.

M. R. BOND


In the last few years there has been a great awakening of public conscience for the plight of the chronically disabled, and detailed studies of social services and work opportunities, and building designs have been carried out with consequent improvement in these services. Gillian Johnson and Ralph Johnson, as a result of a survey of patients with multiple sclerosis in the West of Scotland, conclude in their recent publication that much remains to be done and that there are deficiencies in social and medical support for such patients. In many cases the full use of medical and social services was not made. For example, many patients did not see their general practitioner regularly, and the most severely disabled tended to be those seen least frequently in hospital outpatients. Many of the less severely disabled patients who wanted to work were unaware of relevant training schemes.

The authors, in their discussion, conclude that lack of financial resources, fear of failure to identify the chronically disabled, and fear of communication play a part in the medical and social deficiencies. Their recommendation for assessment clinics where the needs of such patients can be discussed seems reasonable and if, as they say, financial saving might be achieved by a reduction in the present duplication of services, then an early implementation of these recommendations is desirable. This...
Neurology of Childhood Learning Disorders Second edition By Richard J. Schain. (Pp. 156; illustrated; £14.95.) Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1977. This book aims to aid the neurological consultant—paediatric neurologist—who attempts to deal with learning disorders in childhood. There is much wisdom in the book, but I cannot in honesty recommend it either to a general audience or specifically to British readers, unless the reader is prepared to be selective and strictly critical. Within this small book are beautiful discussions of the neurological examination, management, and the place of drug therapy. But interwoven in the text are errors of fact, as in descriptions of seizure types, failure to clarify the neurological distinctions between specific learning disorders (such as “developmental Gerstmann syndrome” and “developmental dyslexia”), an attempt to cover too much ground, and a distortion of emphasis (so that a masklike facies is suggestive of a postencephalitic state or Möbius syndrome, whereas in practice it is likely to be congenital myotonic dystrophy). Important omissions include the lack of mention of the need to measure parental head circumference when evaluating microcephaly or macrocephaly.

I am glad to have the book for its many good points, but if it should come to a third edition, a thorough pruning by a friendly but obsessionable paediatric neurologist might allow a wider recommendation.

J. B. P. STEPHENSON


This monograph is devoted to the “master monstrosity”, the creation of a human without a brain. The authors suggest that, for reasons yet unknown, the rostral neural plate fails to close and thus the lesion originates in the first month of embryonic life.

After a historical introduction, anencephaly, both human and experimental, is reviewed in depth, combining the approaches of teratologist, paediatrician, neuroembryologist, and paediatric pathologist. Perhaps not surprisingly, there is little discussion of the clinical neurology, neuropathology, or neurochemistry. Now that alphafetoprotein screening can drastically reduce the incidence of anencephaly, some mention of ethical considerations would not have been out of place. In the future studies of the neurotransmitter system development in anencephalic abortuses may enlighten our knowledge of the normal development of such systems. Meanwhile this book will find a place on the shelves of interested paediatrician, neuropathologists, obstetricians, neonatologists, and geneticists and in paediatric and radiological reference libraries. But the fearful should open it with care, and be thankful for alphafetoprotein.

J. B. P. STEPHENSON

Notices

The Second European Workshop on Pituitary Adenomas will be held in Paris from 20 to 22 September 1979. Further details may be obtained from the Asclepios Convention Services, 6 rue de Penthèvre, 75008 Paris, France.

The American Electroencephalography Society invites young investigators to apply for its Hans Berger Award honouring the first scientist to describe the electrical activity of the human brain. The award consists of a cash honorarium, a plaque, and the opportunity to present the winning paper at the Society’s 33rd Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, 19–21 September 1979. Original studies, performed by individuals no more than five years post-doctoral or three years post-residency, will be considered by the Berger Award Committee. Those wishing further information concerning eligibility, application requirements, and complete details of the Award, should write to: American EEG Society Executive Office, 3823 N. Glenn Road, Willoughby Hills, Ohio 44094, USA. Telephone: (216) 942–9267.