

Book reviews

Microneurosurgery By RW Rand (pp 470; £46.50) Chicago: YB Medical Publishers Ltd, 1979.

Compared to their colleagues in otology and ophthalmology, neurosurgeons were slow to appreciate the potential of the surgical microscope, that it might allow a greater delicacy of technique, and perhaps extend the range of the possible. The history of microneurosurgery, that is microsurgery as applied to neurosurgery, is relatively short. It is less than 20 years since the first cautious reports, notably by Kurze, illustrating the many ways in which microtechniques might be employed, in chordotomy, rhizotomy, nerve anastomosis, and selected intracranial tumour removal. Today the application of these techniques is widespread, if not universal. There is a steadily growing literature on the indications for the microsurgical method and concerning the review and elaboration of anatomical detail relevant to the magnified surgical field.

This volume sets out to provide a comprehensive account of the various areas in which microsurgical techniques are applied today. Originally based on a Californian symposium, this second edition is a greatly expanded work, with a large number of contributors, some already well known in their field. As in the first edition there are competent introductory chapters on the surgical microscope, and on essential instrumentation. Throughout the work there are contributions on regional microsurgical anatomy—of the sellar region, the internal auditory meatus, the jugular foramen and the circle of Willis—and though many of the illustrations are familiar from earlier publication, they provide a valuable complement to the surgical texts. Of these texts it can be said that there is some variation in their style and in the attention paid to the various topics. The several approaches to the pituitary gland receive extended treatment, transfrontal, subnasal and transnasal transphenoidal routes all being described in detail, with many excellent illustrations. For the problem of the acoustic neuroma however a description of the suboccipital

transmeatal operation of Rand-Kurze is the essence of the presentation, and a related chapter on temporal bone surgery seems inappropriately brief. Again it must be unusual in a discourse on the surgery of trigeminal neuralgia to recommend solely the transtentorial approach for nerve section, and to make no assessment of the posterior fossa route for comparison. On the important problem of cerebral aneurysm surgery the contribution is disappointing, the illustration inadequate, and the whole of little practical value to initiates in the art. They will gain more from the chapter on microvascular surgery, which describes some basic laboratory training techniques and from the following one on vascular bypass for occlusive cerebrovascular disease. For those who engage in peripheral nerve surgery there are four chapters on all aspects of nerve injury and repair. There is also a contribution on tissue transplantation and replantation by microvascular anastomosis.

This well produced volume has many attractive features. In particular the collection of beautifully reproduced detailed anatomical presentations by AL Rhoton adds greatly to the value of the work. Of the surgical contributions some are outstanding, for their concise style, clear description of operative procedures and carefully chosen illustrations. Unfortunately all are not equally valuable, because they are not comprehensive, or are inadequately illustrated, or occasionally because they adopt a wordy conversational style, filled with personal reminiscence, which can be read with interest only once. Some unevenness is difficult to avoid in a multiple author work, but clearer editorial direction might have helped, and even eliminated the inexplicable chapters on audiometry and neuroradiology of the cerebello-pontine angle. More attention might have been given to offering guidance on learning techniques, for as stated in Chapter one considerable practice must be gained in the laboratory, acquiring the varied skills of microdissection, if the surgeon is to provide proper care for his patients. I suspect that the availability

of this volume will be limited by its price.

JJ MACCAFFEE

The suppression of experimental allergic encephalomyelitis and multiple sclerosis

By AN Davison, ML Cuzner (pp 290; £14.80) London: Academic Press, 1980. Multiple sclerosis is a tantalising condition. Its histology indicates an aggressive immunological reaction which leads to the reasonable expectation that the disease could be prevented or treated and patients helped. This reasonably priced book publishes the proceedings of a meeting of the Multiple Sclerosis Society held in October 1979 in memory of Dr Liversedge. Despite helpful chapters by "pure" immunologists it is a book for the initiated. We learn from Paterson that experimental allergic encephalomyelitis (EAE) can be transferred by the supernatant from incubated lymph node cells. This is somewhat surprising because EAE had been regarded as a T cell mediated disease. We still await identification of the chemical nature of the transferring factor. The enormous research on sequencing myelin basic proteins and identifying their encephalitogenic determinants in different species is summarised by Eylar. Hashim summarises evidence that EAE can be prevented and treated with a peptide which is not encephalitogenic. Other methods of treatment of EAE with basic amino acid polymers, with basic protein itself and with polyunsaturated fatty acids are also described in different chapters. Despite allegedly similar changes in the fluctuation of T cells which stick to erythrocytes unusually quickly in both EAE and multiple sclerosis (MS), no convincing immunological similarities between the two conditions has been demonstrated. One argument not emphasised anywhere in the book is that the antigen for chronic relapsing EAE has not been identified but does not appear to be myelin basic protein. The search for that antigen followed by suitable immunological tests in MS would seem appropriate. The book progresses logically to a consideration of treatment

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of MS. Such is the pace of work in this field that since the book's publication two important papers have appeared, one suggesting that immunosuppression is effective and another that boosting immunity with transfer factor helps. Doubtless by the time that this review appears even more contradictory evidence in this field will be available. This book should find a place on the shelf of libraries in any institution where there is a research interest in EAE and MS.

RAC HUGHES

Brain, Behaviour and Bodily Disease
Edited by Herbert Weiner, Myron A Hofer and Albert J Stunkard (pp 388; \$50.32) New York: Raven Press, 1980.

This is Volume 59 of the Research Publications of the Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Disease, and we may suppose (though it is nowhere stated) that the book is derived from the proceedings of the annual meeting of that organisation, perhaps of 1980. That is, it is multiauthored, with discussion following some of the chapters. Having said that, the contents are really very good. There is some nonsense, of course (the introductory chapter may be safely skipped), but the substantive chapters are of a remarkably high and even standard, and succeed in reviewing many fields that are both confusing and controversial. References are plentiful and up to date.

Brain and behavioural factors in asthma, obesity, anorexia nervosa, peptic ulcer, growth and development, cardiac arrhythmias, hypertension and the immune response are all dealt with from the clinical experimental or animal experimental angle, or both. I particularly enjoyed the chapters on neural mechanisms in asthma, reproductive endocrinology in anorexia nervosa, the mechanisms of development of essential hypertension, and the regulation of body weight; although I was surprised in the last of these to find no reference to the brown fat story. Similarly, in the chapter on psychosocial stimuli and disease, where the theory is developed that adrenal cortical activation is associated with helplessness, loss of control and depression, I found no mention of the well-known euphoric effect of corticosteroid drugs.

DN RUSHTON

Drug Concentrations in Neuropsychiatry: Ciba Foundation Symposium 74
(new series) (pp 258 Dfl 94.00, \$45.75) New York: Excerpta Medica, 1980.

The volume is an addition to the CIBA Foundation Symposium Series and contains the proceedings of a symposium on Drug Concentrations in Neuropsychiatry held in 1979. The meeting saw the exchange of views of clinicians and basic scientists working in many different areas but all concerned with the measurement and evaluation of drug levels. The book therefore contains a wide and varied series of chapters on the use of such procedures, each of which is followed by a detailed account of the discussion that took place. The volume is of interest because it emphasises the continuing debate on the value of drug monitoring and its application to clinical practice. Clearly the participants were not unanimous in their views and this provided an interesting forum for those involved in such practice. The emphasis on theoretical aspects of pharmacokinetics and practical aspects of drug monitoring, including the reliability and reproducibility of drug assay procedures, is particularly valuable. Against the book is the varied style of the various authors ranging from the philosophical, to the purely practical and to the reporting of a single study with little discussion. Also, although the inclusion of the general discussion is interesting, it appears disjointed and too long at times. However, to those interested in drug monitoring the book is recommended as a comprehensive survey of current views and as a stage from which further investigation and application of this practice can be pursued.

PG JENNER

Psychiatric Illness 3rd ed By H Merskey (pp 421; £8.50) London: Bailliere Tindall, 1980.

This book is an interesting and praiseworthy attempt by a hospital-based psychiatrist to write a book for general practitioners. From the point of view of style, it gains from single authorship. Inevitably, it is somewhat idiosyncratic (Dr Merskey cites Miss Bates, in Jane Austen's *Emma*, as a "mild case of chronic hypomania"). The author provides a lot of sound and sensible advice, and a rather modest amount of hard facts (there are a total of 77 refer-

ences). In a book which claims to "cover the major types of psychological illness adequately for the needs of the general practitioner," there is no guide to the assessment of suicidal risk in the depressed patient. As this is, *par excellence*, the function of the general practitioner, such an omission is to be regretted. In the fourth edition, it might usefully be rectified at the expense of the six pages on hypnosis.

JLT BIRLEY

Neurobiology of Cerebrospinal Fluid: 1

Edited by James H Wood (pp 749; \$69.50) New York: Plenum Press, 1980. The title of this book is hardly apt. It is not primarily a study of the function of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), but rather an encyclopedia of the CSF in relation to neurological and psychiatric disease. It contains 49 chapters written by 89 authors, functioning in various combinations and permutations. This not surprisingly leads to some unevenness and to some repetitions.

The recent great blossoming of neurochemistry and neurophysiology has naturally led to the anticipation that the defective chemistry and physiology of neurological and psychiatric disease might be characterised in terms of these sciences. Since biopsy of the human brain is not generally acceptable, sampling of CSF is a feasible alternative. Unfortunately, although even lumbar CSF reflects the interstitial fluid of the brain more closely than does blood plasma, it is a poor mirror of either normal or defective metabolism in a specific region of the brain. The problem is akin to that of elucidating the biochemistry, physiology and pathology of a goldfish from analysis of the water in its bowl. Most of the authors tackle their difficult task with energy and efficiency. They provide comprehensive reviews not only of measurements of numerous substances in CSF in many conditions but also of the techniques and problems involved in studying CSF. The lists of references at the end of each chapter are detailed and useful. There is a particularly good chapter by Norrby on the penetration of antimicrobial agents into CSF. The book can be recommended to any one contemplating clinical research involving sampling of CSF but not to the general reader in the neurologic sciences.

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