Books

Year Book of Neurology and Neurosurgery. Edited by Russell N De Jong and Oscar Sugar. (Pp 410; £24.75.) London: Year Book Medical Publishers Ltd, 1981.

There are something like 138 journals of neurology published world-wide. On a conservative estimate this amounts to some 20 000 neurological papers published each year. Although some of these journals can be nobody's everyday reading, the accumulated papers are formidable. All the more reason one should welcome a publication such as the "Year Book", particularly since the publishers state that the distinguished editors of the Year Book series (twenty-five Year Books) critically review more than 500 000 articles each year. With two editors for the Year Book of Neurology and Neurosurgery, each stalwart has critically reviewed 192 articles per week for every week in the year.

This is really a quite extraordinary book. It has been "published without interruption since 1902" as the byline proudly proclaims. It must be familiar to most neurologists and neurosurgeons and is perhaps one of the most uncritically accepted books in the scientific literature. It is a vital piece of equipment for the young neurologist or neurosurgeon intent on one-upmanship. It is essential ammunition for the rapid fire of names and references across the patient's bed and the case-conference floor. If politicians read medicine this would be their book. It is superficial, idiosyncratic and unreliable. There is no attempt to review a subject in depth or critically. In most instances a single paper is summarised and a personal comment added, presumably by the editor. But the superficiality is almost unbelievable: cluster headache (a single paper) described as outlining the "essentials of management . . ." with no mention of suppository or subcutaneous ergotamine; as uncritical comment on a single paper on computerised tomography in herpes simplex encephalitis . . . to add to the list would be easy but pointless.

Surely the only reasonable way to provide a year book of neurology and neurosurgery is in review form such as found in "Recent Advances" and "Modern Trends" or in "excerpts" form with most published papers annotated and the

critique left to the reader. The editors are, however, to be commended on their industry and stamina and scholarship and the publishers on the clear readable lay-out and reasonable price. Whether one agrees with the format or not must be a personal choice. The reviewer favours a more critical and balanced review of published papers on any particular subject, rather than the one-sided or narrow view presented in many of the papers of the Year Book.

LS ILLIS

Neurophysiology IV—Volume 25 of International Review of Physiology. Edited by Robert Porter. (Pp 231; \$34.50.) Baltimore: University Park Press. 1981.

This is a collection of five excellent reviews which will be ideal for teachers and post-graduate students needing informative rather than exhaustive introductions to unfamiliar fields. The volume is devoted mainly to motor control, and the first review by Gage and Hamill on the action of anaesthetics on ion channels is a rather strange biophysical bedfellow to the subsequent articles. The kinetics of ion channels are discussed clearly for both local and general anaesthetics, and molecular models reviewed briefly. Like the others this is not a chapter for beginners in the field; an undergraduate knowledge of physiology is assumed throughout. The next two chapters concern muscle spindles. Prochazka reviews the very delicate work which has allowed observation of muscle spindle discharge during normal movements in unrestrained cats, and Burke describes the equally painstaking research which has allowed percutaneous recording of spindles in man. Each is a fine exposition of a complex field, leading, perhaps unfortunately to rather different conclusions regarding the role of alpha-gamma linkage, and the function of spindle discharge in control of movement. It is at points like this that the reader might require a little more editorial assistance to highlight the current areas of controversy in each field.

These chapters are followed by Proske's article on Golgi tendon organs, which includes not only an informative discussion of their possible role, but also a short section on their central projections. A

welcome review by Jones on the organisation of the mammalian thalamus, a topic generally considered too complex for review at this level, concludes the book. Perhaps because of the range of articles, this will be an essential acquisition for any library rather than an addition to a personal collection.

JOHN ROTHWELL

Monographs in Neural Sciences Vol. 7. Neurobiology of Cholinergic and Adrenergic Transmitters. Edited by E Heldman, A Levy, Y Gutman and Z Vogel. (Pp 200; SFr 89, DM 107, US \$53.50.) Basel: S Karger, 1980.

This is a very marginal book even by the distressing standards that the publishers of conference ephemera adopt. The book's title suggests that one might look for a reasonably comprehensive coverage of problems, and recent progress towards their solution, in the cholinergic and adrenergic system. One would be disappointed; in the articles offered I could find little that had not been published elsewhere and large areas of current interest are left unmentioned; these include current views on cholinergic pathways, choline transport, nicotinic ACh receptors, noradrenergic pathways, and adrenergic receptors. However serotonin has been redefined as an adrenergic transmitter and an article, doubtless worthy, included on serotonin receptors. This last exactly illustrates the expediency with which the editors and publisher have approached their task.

Everybody recognises the problem; the conference organisers need the publisher's advance to pay the contributors' travel expenses. Publishers are happy to co-operate, confident that their profit margins are so large that assured sales to libraries will cover their costs and still provide rich pickings. However, the financial climate is increasingly compelling libraries to be more selective. This book should come low on their list of priorities.

RM MARCHBANKS

Disorders of Human Communication, Volume 2: Clinical Aspects of Dysphasia. By Martin L Albert, Harold Goodglass, Nancy A Helm, Alan B Rubens, Michael

P Alexander. (Pp 194; DM 59.) Springer-Verlag: New York, 1981.

This book is one of a series on disorders of human communication. It is written by three neurologists, a neuropsychologist and a speech pathologist, all working or trained at the Boston University Aphasia Research Center. Each has reviewed the sections written by the others, so there is little repetition, and the text shows an unusual integration of the different disciplines, allowing each a revealing look at the others' thinking. The book is a broadly based practical account of the subject, structurally orientated though not dogmatically so, and not neglectful of the fact that many dysphasics do not fit neatly into any rigidly defined diagnostic category. Almost a quarter is devoted to treatment and rehabilitation, a contentious subject here boldly approached and well reviewed. There is also an interesting chapter on aphasiological curiosities—crossed dysphasia, and dysphasia in polyglots, left handers, deaf mutes and demented subjects.

This is a good book and will have a wide appeal within the speciality. The practising clinical neurologist with an interest in cerebral function, the neuropsychologist, the neurolinguist, the speech pathologist and therapist should all find it invaluable.

JOHN C MEADOWS

Angiography of Spinal Column and Spinal Cord Tumors. By Rene Djindjian, JJ Merland, M Djindjian, P Stoeter. (Edited by M Nadjmi). (Pp 258; DM 220.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag, 1981.

In his classic treatise "*Angiography of the Spinal Cord*" published in 1970, Professor Djindjian included a section on angiography of neurogenic tumours and tumours of the vertebral column, based on rather limited material. Since that time at the Hôpital Lariboisière spinal angiography has become a routine procedure for study of spinal tumour and the authors have accumulated material sufficient to formulate a clear idea of the diagnostic and therapeutic advantages of the method and to assess its future place in routine practice.

In a brief introduction the blood supply of the spinal cord and vertebral column are reviewed and there is a valuable summary of the conduct of spinal angiography indicating which arteries should

be injected in the investigation of tumours in various locations; otherwise technique is not discussed but is covered by a good selection of references. The main part of the book is divided into two parts dealing respectively with spinal cord tumours and tumours and other lesions of the vertebral column. Most of the first part, indeed one third of the book, is concerned with a detailed study of neuroradiology in intraspinal haemangioblastomas and their differential diagnosis including an excellent and beautifully illustrated section on Von Hippel-Lindau disease. The prime importance of angiography in diagnosis and localisation of haemangioblastomas is stressed and its value for preoperative embolisation in selected cases and in following the progress in Von Hippel-Lindau disease is emphasised.

In ependymomas and neuromas angiography shows the size, location and the extent of the tumour and the relationship of the vessels supplying the spinal cord; its value in planning surgical approach is evident but it is only occasionally necessary for diagnosis. Spinal tumours account for less than 1% of subarachnoid haemorrhages, the usual origin being an ependymoma of the cauda equina; the authors present the first report on experience with spinal angiography in tumoral subarachnoid haemorrhage based on a series of five cases. A little under a third of the section on the spine deals with vertebral haemangiomas in which the vascular pattern may be pathognomonic. In most other conditions the angiographic appearances are not stereotyped and it cannot replace histology in differential diagnosis though distinction between benign and malignant conditions is frequently evident. Again, the main value of angiography is for pre-surgical localisation of the cord vessels and for embolisation.

Most surgeons and neuroradiologists rely on the combination of conventional radiology and myelography for the management of masses other than haemangiomas and the addition of computed tomography to more accurately assess bone involvement and soft tissue extension is a further advantage. It is perhaps as well that limitations of angiography have been demonstrated since routine application to spinal lesions would be impractical. The text is concise and well written. The illustrations are superb and the material on which it is based must be virtually unique. It is recommended to all seeking guidance on the place of spinal

angiography in the management of tumours of the spine.

BRIAN KENDALL

Anxiety. New Research and Changing Concepts. Edited by Donald F Klein and Judith G Rabkin. (Pp 325; \$40.12.) New York; Raven Press, 1981.

In 1959, Donald Klein, an American psychiatrist, "was studying the clinical effects of the mysterious, new, and as yet unmarketed drug imipramine". As well as confirming that imipramine had novel antidepressant effects, Klein and his colleagues noted that patients with episodic panic attacks—mainly agoraphobics—also improved markedly. These observations could not be set into the then current American ideas, mainly psychoanalytic, on anxiety, and the observations had the impact of a lead balloon. Now, over 20 years later, the effectiveness of "antidepressants" in treating panics has been amply confirmed and has led to reconceptualisation of the phenomenology and nosological status of episodic anxiety. This book comprises the papers and discussion presented at the Seventieth Annual Meeting of the American Psychopathological Association and in a way represents a tribute to the clinical and research skills of Donald Klein.

The book contains five sections dealing with Psychopharmacology and Anxiety, Genetics, Basic Science Aspects, Psychological Aspects, and Research Communications on Anxiety. The 28 chapters are a mixture of research papers—some good, some bad, some indifferent—review articles, again variable in quality, and theoretical papers. The book is badly organised with no logical progression through the chapters: it should be dipped into and not waded through. The discussion appears to have been only lightly edited, if at all, and contains the typical stream-of-consciousness prolixity of American symposiasts.

The book is very useful to the specialist clinician and researcher interested in anxiety, particularly of the episodic form. It does not comprise an overview of the topic but concentrates on the biological and therapeutic aspects. It is well-produced, not expensive by modern standards, and well-indexed. But a book for libraries and cognoscenti.

MH LADER