Book reviews

Vestibular Neurotology (Advances in Oto-Rhino-Laryngology 28). Edited by P Molina-Negro and RA Bertrand. (Pp 148; Sfr115, DM138, \$69.) Basel: Karger, 1982.

This publication derives from the Symposium of Clinical Neuro-otology held in Montreal in 1980 at which, according to the authors, it was hoped to achieve a better understanding between practitioners of the various disciplines encompassed by neuro-otology. As a report of these proceedings the book must fail as it has been too long in the womb. There is no reason why proceedings should not appear within months of the event. As a source of communication between different groups of scientists and clinicians it is a little more successful.

Inevitably multi-author works are patchy in scientific content and grammatical style; this book is no exception. The neurologist will find, as usual, the chapters by Gacek on labyrinthine innervation and cupulolithiasis stimulating and clearly presented. It is a pity that the proof reader (a dying species) did not check which legend belonged to which figure! The chapter on surgery for Meniere's disease from Denmark by Bretlau and colleagues is both valuable and remarkable in that they report a double blind trial of surgery including sham operations. In this era of ethics committees it is refreshing to see a proper controlled study which shows that surgeons are wasting their time doing sacculus surgery, a result that hopefully will save patients undergoing such procedures. There is another surgical article by Ouaknine on arterial loops in the cerebello-pontine angle in which the anatomy is well illustrated, but the paper marred by a "woolly" discussion on possible ephaptic transmission underlying hemifacial spasm. Surgeons meddling in this area might, with benefit, take a leaf from the Dane's book.

The remaining chapters are an assortment of neuro-otological topics ranging from perilymph fistula through to cerebro-vascular disease. None is of high quality and the statement by Meloche that "there are sufficient data to say that aspirin has an important role in the prevention of TIAs and stroke" will come as a surprise to many neurologists.

This book cannot be recommended to the neurologists for the two or three chapters of interest.

P RUDGE

The Psychiatrist's Guide to Diseases of the Nervous System. By Richard Lechtenberg. (Pp 478; £27.25.) Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1982.

This book is prefaced by the statement that it answers the questions that psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric social workers and other mental health professionals ask neurologists more frequently. Indeed, it is a good attempt and presents easily readable data which spans these professionals' queries, and at various levels of assumed basic knowledge. For instance, the chapter on "diagnostic tools" which includes encephalography, CSF studies, and other techniques, deals with very basic details such as descriptions of the procedures, and proceeds to include fairly detailed result interpretations. As it is aimed at a psychiatrically orientated population, it covers relevant neurological aspects of several disorders, including those of speech, cognition, affect, sexual dysfunction, sleep, movement, the special senses, seizures and headache.

Common problems are allotted a fair amount of discussion such as seizures (30 pages) and headaches and facial pain (40 pages), whereas uncommon illnesses such as rabies is given only a mention, but nevertheless the point is made that psychiatric symptoms are often the most prominent early manifestation of this disease. A syndrome "not yet assigned to strictly neurologic or psychologic causes" (author's remark) such as Gilles de la Tourette syndrome, is appropriately given three pages of the 62 devoted to movement disorders in general.

The pages on sexual dysfunction manage to cover subjects from arousal and impotence (differentiating the neurological and psychological causes and accompanying features), to the organic Kluver Bucy syndrome, delineating the conditions in which it can occur. All in all, a handy reference book, especially as it is levelled at several professions under the rubric of psychiatry.

MARY M ROBERTSON

Treatment of Cerebral Palsy and Motor Delay (2nd ed). By Sophie Levitt. (Pp 267; £11.75.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1982.

The second edition of this book is to be welcomed, and the therapist helping the physically handicapped child will gain a wealth of knowledge from the author's unique experience in this field. The importance of the parents' role is stressed

and selected parents, with guidance from the therapist, may well benefit from reading some of the chapters. The reviewer is not qualified to comment on many of the technical aspects of this book but is convinced that it explains satisfactorily many of the aims and methods used by therapists striving to help these children. Doctors who are members of the therapeutic team will read the book with profit and gain insight into the work of an allied discipline.

The eclectic approach is surely the right one so that the technique used can be suited to a particular child's needs and to the personality of the physiotherapist. As stated in the Preface the first four chapters are concerned with the principles of treatment and daily care, with discussion on how to reconcile different viewpoints. The next three chapters cover aspects of assessment, the penultimate one of the problems of deformity and the final one group therapy.

The second edition expands on aspects of learning, emphasising that physiotherapists are training as well as treating children with motor problems; and functional categories are given more importance than diagnostic ones. Although the doctor cannot be directly involved in such treatment how can it be prescribed with confidence or the results assessed if the methods remain a mystery?

NEIL GORDON

Child Psychiatry and the Law. By Diane H Schetky and Elissa P Benedek. (Pp 316; \$34.00.) New York: Raven Press, 1981.

Child psychiatry has many points of meeting with the law—the assessment of delinquents, child abuse and neglect, and custody disputes, to mention but a few. This edited volume, written largely by psychiatrists and lawyers, set out to provide "a solid theoretical and practical background in child forensic psychiatry" for professionals of all disciplines working at that interface. The law in questions is that of the USA, which differs in certain key respects from that in the UK, but the issues are ones that transcend national barriers. The first section of the book (especially that written by the editors) is full of sound, sensitive, and sensible advice on practical issues in preparing court reports and in giving evidence as an expert witness. The chapters on specific topics are more variable in quality and, in particular, the statements on empirical findings are rather mixed. For example, it is highly questionable that

parents with an IQ in the 70-79 range are "unlikely to provide adequate parenting"; or that if there is wide subtest variability on the Wechsler scales "it can be assumed that such an individual will be found to be grossly ineffective in some aspects of behaviour or judgement"; or that most delinquency occurs "under conditions of socioeconomic deprivation" or that delinquents often show "a subtle neurological impairment". On the other hand, some of the other chapters (such as those on sexual abuse and on the child as a witness) provide useful guidelines. A book of this kind fulfils a much needed role and in some respects this volume serves the purpose very well. However, it is too mixed in quality to give it an unreservedly positive recommendation.

MICHAEL RUTTER

A Manual of Electro-encephalographic Technology. By CD Binnie, AJ Rowan and TH Gutter. (Pp 363; £30 hardback; £11.95 paper.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

At long last, here is another book dealing with all aspects of EEG technology. This book covers all the topics that the standard work "EEG Technology" by Cooper Osselton and Shaw and adds a very useful chapter on the EEG and its clinical use, covering the normal EEG, EEG abnormalities and the uses and abuses of the EEG. I particularly recommend this last section to all medical students and junior doctors, as it settles the question of when an EEG is helpful in the care of a patient.

The layout of the book is excellent, although perhaps Chapter 8, on artefacts and interference in EEG recording should have preceded Chapter 7 on supplementary recording procedures, but this is a very minor point and the figures and illustrations are clear and precise. Chapter 7.2 on intermittent photic stimulation (IPS) is the most controversial section in this otherwise reliable manual. I question the author's statement that the use of continuous IPS over a period with the flash rate slowly being increased and decreased cannot usually produce photic following (even taking into account the non-linearity of many photic stimulators). I do not share their belief that photic stimulation is a procedure "usually well-tolerated" by patients, and think that prolonging the procedure in order to produce the exact frequency at which patients are photosensitive is unnecessary and better-suited to the research laboratory than the average

hospital EEG department. However, I can thoroughly recommend this book as a comprehensive and very readable guide to EEG technology and it is not likely to be too expensive for the hospital departments or technicians.

PT ASSELMAN

Symposium on Idiopathic Low Back Pain (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Miami 1980). Edited by Augustus A White and Stephen L Gordon. (Pp 492; £43.25.) London: CV Mosby Company, 1982.

These proceedings of a multi-disciplinary workshop of scientists and clinicians consider the cause of backache. They finish, as they start, by recognising that the exact cause of an individual patient's pain is usually not known though the suggested clinical diagnosis of "idiopathic organic spinal pain" seems to me unlikely to replace the simpler "non-specific backache". This is not a text on how to treat a patient with backache but rather an over-view of current research into the physical basis of backache. As such, it is an essential library reference book which will be of interest mainly to those studying for examinations or those who find a search for knowledge compulsive. The sections on biomechanics and biochemistry are excellent as would be expected from the prestigious group of contributors. The section on epidemiology is good though marred by a poor statutory chapter on psychological factors. The section on anatomy is good though unexciting while the section in neuro-mechanisms is only fair though enlivened by a chapter on ectopic firing from damaged nerve. This is not light nor easy reading and requires careful study and thought, but no-one who views current medical treatment of backache should imagine that there is any easy answer. Its major value is in excellent summaries which integrate the individual contributions to define the questions which need answers, the direction which future research should take and the problems involved. It will be fascinating to re-read this review in 50 years to see which seeds germinate.

G WADDELL

Seminars in Neurological Surgery: Lumbar Disc Disease. Edited by RW Hardy. (Pp 344; \$47.12.) New York: Raven Press, 1982.

This is one of a new series of multi-author books on topics of neurosurgical interest

which are being sponsored by the Congress of Neurological Surgeons and the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. It sets a high standard and raises high expectations for some of the projected future titles in the series.

Most of the authors are from the Cleveland Clinic. The twenty chapters review these aspects of degenerative disease of the lumbar spine which are of most interest to the specialist in this field. No relevant topic appears to have been left out. Amongst chapters of especial value are those on CT scanning of the lumbar spine, the microsurgical treatment of lumbar disc disease, complications of lumbar disc surgery, repeat operations for lumbar disc, and non-surgical approaches to chronic back pain.

The book is well-edited and well-produced. Most of the chapters are succinct, clearly written and thoughtful and provide good lists of relevant and interesting references. The standard of production and of the illustrations is excellent. The fact that the problems of lumbar disc disease are discussed from the point of view of the neurosurgeon has resulted in a book which is unified and coherent and which avoids the nebulous muddle which, sadly, often results when attempts are made to bring together in a single volume the views on the lumbar spine of those in quite separate branches of medicine. It is strongly recommended to all specialists who have a serious interest in spinal disease. This reviewer is glad to possess his copy and anticipates that he will often need to consult it in the future, both for reference and for stimulation.

RS MAURICE-WILLIAMS