

complete as well as readable and up-to-date, expertly covering all aspects of intracranial pathology. The end-chapter references comprise an almost complete list of the pre-1982 head CT literature. The serious student need look no further. While cheaper paperback texts are now available for the novice, this book can be recommended to a more sophisticated audience such as the practising neurologist and neuroradiologist, and as a bench book in CT departments.

E H BURROWS

**Human Motor Neuron Diseases. Volume 36 of Advances in Neurology.** Edited by Lewis P Rowland. (Pp 715; \$117.80.) New York: Raven Press, 1982.

This book is part of the "Advances in Neurology" series of Raven Press, which is known to all neurologists. It is based on a symposium held in Scottsdale, Arizona, in 1981 under the auspices of the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Although the aim was to discuss problems in the pathogenesis of motor neuron disease, the remit was far wider since, understandably, clues from other motor neuron diseases could well be relevant.

Although the overall standard is excellent, I particularly enjoyed the clinical and pathological sections. There is a definitive chapter on epidemiology by John Kurtzke and an excellent review of the relationship of antecedent poliomyelitis by Milton Alter and Leonard Kurland. Although there are several chapters on virology and immunology, we still have no definite clues as to aetiology—as disappointingly revealed by the small section on therapy.

As with all Raven Press publications, this volume is beautifully produced and is essential reading for anyone interested in research of motor neuron disease. The discussions have been included and, unlike other symposia, are rewarding to read. I am afraid the book is too expensive for most individuals to buy but encouragement should be given to the librarian to include it in the neurological section.

F CLIFFORD ROSE

**Annual Progress in Child Psychiatry and Child Development** Edited by Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas. (Pp 688 \$40.80) New York: Brunner Mazel Inc, 1981.

One habitually approaches compendia of "Recent Advances . . ." or "Annual Prog-

ress . . ." with a degree of circumspection, especially so when such bold claims as this are made for the volume: "A selection of the year's outstanding contributions to the understanding and treatment of the normal and disturbed child". Edited by two of the elder statesmen of child psychiatry the work comprises forty-one articles, culled from twenty journals. Seventeen papers originate from just three (American) publications. The structure of the annual is sensible, with ten main sections devoted to a variety of topics including: developmental theory and empirical studies, clinical issues, language and adolescence. Each section is prefaced by perfunctory remarks from the editors. No consistent attempt has, it seems, been made to provide a coherent sense of progress in this challenging subject, although it should be noted articles of a traditional psychoanalytic stripe are conspicuous by their absence. So are "foreign language" contributions, the entire enterprise having a somewhat parochial air. That said, what conclusions would one draw from this work about recent advances in knowledge of normal and abnormal child psychology? In a word, progress is conceptual. As Thomas himself puts it "current developmental theories are (nowadays) almost uniformly interactionist in their formulations", and by that he means interaction between the individual and his social environment. This perspective is being increasingly frequently operationalised, and is demonstrated by studies presented here; for example, examining the mother-infant attachment process or the reactions of children to the birth of a sibling. The resultant data not only call into question conventional views of psychological growth but indicate new directions in the management and treatment of childhood disorders.

DAVID SKUSE

**Seminars in Neurological Surgery—Clinical Management of Intracranial Aneurysms.** Edited by LN Hopkins, Donlin M Long. (Pp 331; \$48.28.) New York: Raven Press, 1982.

This multi-author book most adequately covers all aspects of injury to the cervical spine and cervical spinal cord. As with all books attempting to cover a clinical problem in its entirety the chapters are uneven in content and style and leave some doubt as to the breadth and sophistication of the intended audience. The early chapters

relating to clinical assessment and mechanism are appropriate to trainees in accident departments, with their special emphasis on diagnostic pitfalls. Excellent chapters relating to neurophysiology endeavour to delineate the application of evoked potentials to diagnosis and prognosis and their correlation with neurological findings. These would particularly interest trainee neurosurgeons and some of their consultant colleagues. All concerned with treatment of such cases would find the chapters on management well worthy of attention, though some might disagree with the tendency to early surgery wherein instability was assumed on less than firm grounds. The poor prognosis of complete cord lesions reflects universal experience. Complications of treatment are dealt with fully and many of the illustrative cases are enlightening.

This book serves a useful purpose as the collected up to date thoughts of well known authorities and should at least be available in every department dealing with spinal injuries. It is useful reading and a good reference work.

ALAN RICHARDSON

The authors are right to criticise the use of psychosurgery on children, on prisoners and on involuntary patients; they can also justifiably complain of its use for such nebulous behavioural disorders as hyperactivity and excessive aggression. Psychosurgery has always been open to attack for lack of clear evidence of efficacy and for the absence of controlled studies; these are the authors' strongest grounds for criticism. As non-medical scientists they can hardly perhaps be expected to sympathise with the clinician's dilemmas and his preference for using patients over time as their own controls. The book's reiterated demand for rigour and scientific purity becomes in the end rather wearisome.

Much of the book's content dates from the fifties and sixties. It would have helped the reader to be told succinctly what operations are now done in which countries for what conditions and for what illnesses. Of the many techniques, which are the survivors?

The style and language are refreshingly simple, although "to lesion" is unwelcome and "operatee", which occurs on scores of pages (why not patient?) is a horror.

ALAN NORTON

**Neuropsychology and Neurolinguistics. Selected papers.** By Egon Weigl. (Pp 360; DM 105.) The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1981.

Egon Weigl's investigations in the field of neuropsychology were mostly conducted during his retirement. He continued to publish original work up until his death in 1979: *Neuropsychology and Neurolinguistics* was in preparation at that time. It is prefaced with introductions from Luria and Bierwisch, and a brief autobiography by the author. The book contains a collection of Weigl's papers many of which appear for the first time in translation, and others which have been taken from relatively inaccessible sources.

*Neuropsychology and Neurolinguistics* is mostly concerned with investigations into language and literacy dysfunction, the principal exception being his excellent discussion of classification and sorting tasks originally published in 1927. Weigl's approach to language dysfunction is more concerned with an analysis of the interrelationships and dissociations between components of the "speech functional system" rather than with localisation. He was also actively involved with attempts to remediate deficits in access to particular

functional components by the use of "deblocking" techniques.

Weigl's work has often anticipated more recent "western" theoretical analyses of neuropsychological dysfunction, and many of his ideas are very stimulating. However, *Neuropsychology and Neurolinguistics* is not without its flaws. The quality and intelligibility of the translation is sometimes poor, and the style of reporting empirical investigations is frequently unnecessarily complex. Nevertheless, I would recommend this book to anyone with an active research involvement in neuropsychology as a useful primary source of papers from an insightful and occasionally brilliant clinical investigator.

R MCCARTHY

**Acetylsalicylic acid: new uses for an old drug.** Edited by HJM Barrett, J Hirsh, J Fraser Mustard. Raven Press, New York. (US \$53.32.)

With modern printing techniques it should no longer be necessary for a review to have to begin by complaining that a report of a symposium is three years out of date. The nature of the material presented at such meetings is such that it is only of real value to those present, forming as it does the basis for useful informal discussion, and often triggering a series of new experiments when the delegates get back to the laboratory. Three years further on there can only be a few contributions of lasting value.

This book concerns a conference held in March 1980 when there was great interest in the role of aspirin as an antithrombotic drug. Many clinicians needed to be informed about the rationale for its use, and detailed discussions of the early trials were of interest. I suspect most now know the story of "goody" prostacyclin and "baddy" thromboxane, and the theoretical arguments that a paediatric tablet every third day might be the "right" dose of aspirin. Some of the contributions remain relevant to live issues; for example Kelton's piece on the sex difference in the effect of aspirin on platelet behaviour that can be seen in the results of many trials and in some animal experiments.

For people working in this field there are many good reviews of background research but they will find articles on pyrexia, inflammation and the ductus arteriosus which seem out of place when the book basically concerns the role of aspirin and prostaglandins on thrombosis and

haemostasis. Perhaps the most useful parts of the book now are the reviews of side effects. If the current second phase of massive clinical trials confirms a stroke-preventing role for aspirin, the side effect/dose equation will become of crucial importance to widespread prescribing habits.

MJG HARRISON

## Notices

### The Volvo awards for low back pain research

The Volvo Company of Goteborg, Sweden, this year has sponsored three prizes of \$5000.00 each. Awards will be made competitively on the basis of scientific merit in the following three areas:

(1) Clinical studies, (2) Bioengineering studies, (3) Studies in other basic science areas.

Details of the conditions of the competition from:

Prof Alf L Nachemson,  
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery 1,  
Sahlgren Hospital,  
S-413 45 Goteborg,  
Sweden.

The Sixth International Symposium on Brain Edema will be held in Tokyo, Japan, 8-10 November, 1984. Further information may be obtained from the Secretariat, Department of Neurosurgery, Tokyo Medical and Dental School of Medicine, 1-5-45, Yushima, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo, 113 Japan.

### CORRECTION

The book review by Alan Richardson (*J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry* 1983;46:592) referred to **Early Management of Acute Spinal Cord Injury**, edited by Charles H Tator. New York. Raven Press (Pp 444; \$41.00) and not to the title which appeared above the review.