Intracranial Pressure in Infancy and Childhood. Volume 15 of Monographs in Paediatrics. Edited by E Paraicz, (Pp 146; SFr 98) Basel: Karger, 1981.

The practice of publishing monographs composed of a collection of papers from international meetings is now well established. While regretted by some it is occasionally useful, representing as it does a collection of the state of the art at a particular time. In that respect this volume may serve a purpose for those in paediatric neurosurgery, as indicating the present place of intracranial pressure monitoring in the management of children's neurosurgery. Like all these volumes it is late, the meeting to which it refers was held in mid-1981 and the volume is now available over a year later. It also suffers from the defect of the extreme brevity of its communications, many of which have by this time been published *in extenso* in neurological journals. As a result the treatment of a number of subjects is regrettably superficial. The monograph is organised into six sections and particularly in the first, the techniques of intracranial pressure monitoring, the reader may regret the absence of more specific and detailed descriptions of the technical devices involved. The remaining sections, hydrocephalus, craniocerebral trauma, brain tumour, developmental disorders including subdural effusion and a variety of other assorted paediatric conditions likewise contain some material which is of interest. A fair proportion of the work emanates from the authors' own paediatric clinic in the University of Budapest and as such represents an insight into Eastern European work which is less easily obtained from Western European literature, but the greater part of the remainder of the volume is available in the literature as a whole and more extensively reported.

Nevertheless this brief series of summaries will be of interest to neurosurgeons managing paediatric problems although at a price of over £20 for a slim volume of 145 pages, one may doubt that it will have a wide sale.

LINSAY SYMON

Posterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion. Edited by Paul M Lin. (Pp 308; \$44.50.) Illinois: Charles C Thomas, 1982.

This book is based on a workshop on lumbar posterior interbody fusion held in Philadelphia in 1981. Every facet of the subject is exhaustively discussed in 14 chapters by 12 neurosurgeons and

orthopaedic surgeons, notably Dr Ralph Cloward and Dr Paul Lin whose 500 personal cases are reviewed. The topics discussed include the biomechanical procedures underlying the operation, the various techniques available, the results of the operation and their evaluation, and the use of this type of fusion in spinal stenosis and spondylolisthesis. A useful last chapter contains the transcript of an entertaining question and answer session from an expert panel workshop.

In this country neurosurgeons tend to fight shy of using fusion for degenerative disease of the lumbar spine. There exists a widespread feeling that lumbar fusion is a hazardous and unsatisfactory operation, requiring prolonged hospitalisation and troublesome complications. This reviewer has a feeling of slight unease about this attitude and wonders whether we are not sometimes too timid in dealing with some of those patients who have incapacitating chronic low back pain after surgery for a disc protrusion or canal stenosis. This feeling of unease has been exacerbated by reading this thoughtful and well edited volume. Posterior interbody fusion often appears to give rise to enormous benefit, and must be the preferred method of fusion because of the fact that the grafts are gripped tightly by the adjacent vertebral bodies, thus permitting early mobilisation. As with most of the works of this publishing house, this book is beautifully produced with an attractive typeface and a high standard of both line and photographic illustration.

RS MAURICE-WILLIAMS

Neurobehavioural Consequences of Closed Head Injury. By Harvey S Levin, Authur L Benton RG Grossman, (Pp 279; £20.00.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

This is a book of considerable worth written by three acknowledged experts in the field. The authors set the scene by discussing at length the pathophysiological mechanisms of brain damage in closed head injury, and give a brief account of the epidemiology of the condition before beginning to describe the psychological consequences. Various aspects of psychological outcome are covered ranging from memory deficits to more general cognitive deficits, with specific chapters on language deficit, rehabilitation, and future research issues. In view of the magnitude of memory deficits, a considerable proportion of the book is devoted to this aspect of outcome, together with more general cognitive outcome. However, it is a little surprising that

language defects and perceptuomotor deficits—not a serious long term problem for most patients—are given separate chapters. The authors have included a chapter on psychiatric aspects of outcome, but this is perhaps the weakest part of the book, particularly so as it fails to deal with any of the social and family consequences of head injury. Early after injury cognitive defects loom large, but by the end of the first year after injury, the serious consequences are not physical or cognitive, but are familial and psychosocial. This lack aside, the book is relevant, clearly written, and logically organised. It contains information of interest to physicians and surgeons dealing with head injured patients, as well as psychologists and therapists managing effects of traumatic brain injury.

DN BROOKS

Clinical Neuropathology. Edited by RO Weller, M Swash, DL McLellan, CL Scholtz. (Pp 329; £23.50.) Berlin, Springer-Verlag, 1983.

A text by four authors that "grew out of a course" at Southampton organised jointly by two neurologists and two neuropathologists. There are nine other contributors: a couple of the topics, on metabolic disorders and inborn lysosomal storage disorders are written by experts in these fields; the others, including three neurosurgeons, have collaborated on seven of the total of seventeen chapters. The illustrations, including scanning and transmission electron micrographs, are excellent, and there is a good subject index. The book reflects the need for those in different disciplines to meet over a subject, and it illustrates the teaching and the practice in the youngest centre of neuropathology in the UK. In spite of chapters on dementia and on developmental and neonatal neuropathology, psychiatrists and paediatric clinicians are missing. It remains a problem to keep abreast with what goes on, for example, in the very common Alzheimer's disease, the recent neurochemical, immunological and anatomical developments are barely touched upon. The subject of neuropathology and applied neurobiology is, as the introduction indicates, enormous. Those interested will be stimulated to read more. The book may well have ended with the offer to mend (A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V, Scene 2), but there is an Appendix on sterilization procedures in "CJD"; the recommendations about that rare disease are far from final.

IVAN JANOTA