on spinal extra-dural metastases and their management. This collection suffers from lack of direction in terms of subject matter; there is no editorial selection of good from poor and little in the way of organisation of the papers into subject matter. Any discussion that did take place is not published. Almost 80% of the reports contain information already available in literature and many of them contribute no more than that which is obtained in any undergraduate textbook of neurology, pathology or oncology. Some authors have not contributed anything original, merely reviewed some papers. The case for chemotherapy, radiotherapy, indications and methods of spinal column fixation are all poorly presented and to the uninstructed provide a very one-sided view of the management of the condition for extradural spinal column fixation using Meurig-Williams clamps would not be accepted in many spinal surgical centres as an adequate means of vertebral columns immobilisation. One paper on chemohormonal therapy for breast cancer metastases in 13 patients reported 12 months' remission in comparison to 7 months using a different therapeutic regimen. Studies like this get oncology a bad name.

Attached to the end of the series on intracranial metastases are various reports from other German workers on experimental studies and cerebral blood volume, control of intracranial pressure, the effects of profound hypotension on cerebral pressure, the effects of profound hypotension on cerebral energy metabolism and studies in pituitary hypophysectomy. This is work

Reviewed as a report of the annual German meeting, this collage will be of interest to the members who attended the meeting. As a contribution to the understanding of the condition, it cannot be recommended.

ALAN CROCKARD


During the last two years, four books devoted to this subject have landed on my desk. For such a subject this constitutes a spate. Craniosynostosis has interested many neurosurgeons, especially in the paediatric field, for a long time. Publication of these books seems more likely to reflect the accumulation of experience and hence a more authoritative approach rather than a sudden revival of interest. This volume is unique, however, in having as its editor a nuclear medicine physician. The reasons for this are well explained in the introduction but make me wonder whether this precedent is a warning for the things to come in neurosurgery.

An encyclopaedic approach is attempted and to a large extent succeeds. Thus radiology of the skull is described extensively with numerous diagrams and radiographs. Pathology, classification, diagnosis and bone scanning have all chapters of their own bringing together a wealth of information previously widely scattered in journals. Very little, however, of the information will influence the practical neurosurgeon's management. For example, no fewer than 58 syndromes are described in which craniosynostosis plays a part together with over a dozen further conditions associated with craniosynostosis. It is remarkable that the editor and his team have managed without a geneticist among them.

The longest chapter, understandably, is the one on surgical management of craniosynostosis. Summaries of the larger published series are aided by a further selection of excellent photographs. The tyro by this time, however, will be satiated with information particularly when he is provided with a wide variety of operations from which to choose. Fortunately, for each variety of the condition a section called Authors' Experience describes what is actually done in Rome—that is, at the Catholic University.

After this book little more is needed except for paediatric neurosurgeons to publish their methods and results, but only after their experience has become sufficiently great.

KENNETH TILL


This is written as a combined thesis by two Dutch scientists one of whom is a neurosurgeon and the other an engineer. The volume-pressure relationship (VPR) and cerebrospinal fluid pulse pressure (CSFPP) are difficult subjects to make interesting. While the book has not been written for a wide commercial audience its clear and well presented arguments together with plenty of diagrams and graphical displays more than compensate for this.

The authors' ideas are introduced against a background review of the relevant literature and as is the case with work involving VPR and CSFPP there are many mathematical equations and derivations used to express the hypotheses. The benefits of co-ordinating this work between an engineer and a surgeon are obvious here, but without an understanding of the mathematics involved these have to be accepted at face value. Two notable points here are the inclusion of a constant term into the experimental description of the VPR and quantification of the change in cerebral blood volume at each heart beat.

The middle chapters describe well conceived and original experimental work generally based on the relationship between the VPR and CSFPP under different pathophysiological circumstances including brain compression, hypercapnia, hypotension and hypertension. Chapter 8 tidily concludes the first part of the book with a general discussion that always tries to retain clinical relevance within its perspective.

The last two chapters are concerned with CSF dynamics and consist of a detailed mathematical derivation of the authors' theoretical model followed by animal experiments which verify it. Chapter 9 is the most difficult chapter in the book as it is comprised almost solely of mathematical equations. I felt this whole section represented a change in direction away from the main theme of VPR and CSFPP, although, as the authors point out, CSF absorption and formation are related to pressure-volume dynamics.

This is work of high quality and is an important contribution to the study of pressure-volume dynamics. Clear scientific argument and good presentation make its reading a rewarding experience. Criticism about methods and results may come from other workers in the field, but that is only to be expected. This book should be read by all neurosurgeons involved in ICP research.

RA JOHNSTON


I became slightly bewildered when I started to read the first chapter of this book. The account of the fundamental unit of nervous activity, the excitation and propagation of neuronal action potentials, was not quite...