**Immunology of the Nervous System (No 17 Current Topics in Immunology Series).** By S Leibowitz and RAC Hughes. (Pp 304; £22.50) London: Edward Arnold, 1983.

The modern clinical neurologist relies more and more on laboratory investigations in making his diagnosis and initiating specific treatment. Indeed, the art of clinical neurology progresses in parallel with the new knowledge obtained in the basic sciences. Neuroimmunology, the study in health and disease of the interaction between the nervous and immune systems, is perhaps the most popular and potentially rewarding of the new specialities. The neurologist who neglects this field does so at his cost but Drs Leibowitz and Hughes have made his instruction easy and pleasant in their book. There is good coverage of clinical aspects of neuroimmunology, with the correct emphasis being laid on what the clinician needs to know. Controversy is avoided and the style is clear and restrained. Common neuroimmunological disorders, such as multiple sclerosis and myasthenia gravis, are discussed in detail and there is an excellent account of the immunological features of nervous system infections. A good description of tumour immunity and a chapter on recent advances in neurobiology, are included. Helpful chapters on basic immunology precede discussions on the use of laboratory models for human, immune-mediated, neurological diseases. The illustrations are good and the material is comprehensive but compactly presented. The authors, a professional immunologist and a clinical neurologist, are to be congratulated on putting together a book which will appeal to neurologists, general physicians and all with an interest in up-to-date clinical neurology.

**PETER O BEHAN**


The first Princeton conference on cerebrovascular disease was held in 1954 and was a pioneering effort in the field of small closed conferences on special subjects. It has been held every second or third year since and publication of the proceedings has made a considerable contribution to education in the field. This contribution will be greatly reduced if future volumes, like the present, appear more than a year after the meeting. The field is changing so rapidly that accounts of the state of the art in, for example, NMR or PET scanning a year ago are of little value.

There are, however, more enduring contributions. Hachinski's survey of prognostic factors, separated into asymptomatic, warning, acute and recovery phases, is extremely helpful. It is also useful to know that asymptomatic carotid bruits carry little risk of stroke, and, for those concerned with community prevention programmes, that the occurrence of TIAs can be reliably identified by means of a questionnaire.

On the scientific side the inclusion of a section on intravascular factors reflects the current movement away from the vessel wall to haemorheological and other factors affecting the behaviour of the blood. This is encouraging as being more likely to offer therapeutic possibilities.

The standard of production is high with good illustrations. The dust cover says the volume "will be a vital stimulus to all researchers studying cerebrovascular disease"; it is unfortunate it will be a delayed stimulus.

**JOHN MARSHALL**


Recently there has been a plethora of books dealing with the treatment of degenerative disorders of the spine from a surgical point of view. This appears to reflect the increasing appreciation of the fact that the management of patients with these conditions is considerably more complex than was once thought. The advent of improved radiological information from CT scanning and from water soluble contrast myelography has also contributed to a revival of interest in what has often been thought of as a relatively dull and humdrum branch of neurosurgery.

This present volume is an edited and revised version of several papers presented to a symposium held at Gainesville, Florida, in 1980. The topics discussed include lumbar spondylosis and stenosis, high resolution CT scanning of the lumbar spine, patient selection for disc surgery, microdiscectomy, posterior lumbar interbody fusion and also the general use of spinal fusion in lumbar degenerative disease, chemonucleolysis, spinal infections and two chapters on failed back surgery. It will be seen that virtually all aspects of the field which are currently subjects of interest and controversy have been covered.

This book is well produced and well edited. The illustrations are relevant, numerous and of the very highest quality. On the whole the chapters are succinct, well written and concentrate on the key issues. Most of the contributors show a sensible and thoughtful awareness of the many difficult problems involved in the management of this group of patients and of the importance of not adding to that