Book reviews

are shown to be effective, but no more so than bromocriptine; psychosis and ergot-like toxicity are unsolved hazards.

Of the dyskinesias, Huntington's disease shows benefit from tetraabenazine and is little improved by anticholinergics. Claims are made that a course of levodopa/carbidopa may improve tardive dyskinesia. Another paper claims benefit of this intractable condition by reserpine or tetraabenazine as presynaptic dopamine blockade. Cervical cord stimulation achieves some measure of success in athetosis-dystonia in cerebral palsy.

Overall, this book has something of interest in this fascinating field for most neurologists. But the wordy introductions, each telling the same well known tale of the failures of levodopa and its side effects, are monotonous and cry out for the heavier use of the editorial red pencil. Herein lies the main problem of books of this type. Superficially they appear to be a collection of essays or articles by selected writers; but closer scrutiny shows they are no more than proceedings of a sponsored international conference: in this case with neither place nor date given. Readers are all too familiar with the hastily prepared and scantily edited manuscripts which stem from these sources. In this instance the distinguished editors have made the most of the material (in itself, excellent in parts), and the quality of the publisher's text and illustrations is high.

Unfortunately, despite these merits, the resulting format is not always intelligible, succinct and coherent in style. One is left with a valuable collection of factual material, (though much of it is available elsewhere) with too much repetition and too many stylistic infelicities for comfortable digestion.

Is it not time that medical publishers and medical scientists realised that you can have a useful, informative and interesting conference or symposium without the obligation to put it in print?

JMS PEARCE

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

Cerebrovascular Diseases. Thirteenth Research (Princeton) Conference. Edited by Martin Reivich and Howard I Hurtig. (Pp 457; \$90.52.) New York: Raven Press, 1983.

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 haemorrhological 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

Lumbar Spine Surgery. Indications, Techniques, Failures and Alternatives. Edited by Joseph C Cauthen. (Pp 225; £33.50.) Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1983.

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

very large pool of people whose lives have been made worse by injudicious back surgery. As one contributor points out, the number of patients in this group is steadily increasing as a failed back operation does not lead to a decreased life span. The situation may in some respects be worse than that produced by cancer for at least in the latter condition death removes a number of unhappy and unsatisfied patients for whom the medical profession can do nothing.

It is a pleasure to be able to recommend a book which this reviewer has found to be both informative and stimulating. All those with a special interest in the surgery of the spine will find much that is of value and interest within it.

RS MAURICE-WILLIAMS

Cerebral Vascular Disease. Butterworths International Medical Reviews Neurology 3. Edited by Michael G Harrison, Mark L Dyken. (Pp 414; £23.00.) Sevenoaks: Butterworths, 1983

In this book it is the aim of the editors to provide readers with a background against which they may have a clear view of the advances in understanding and management of cerebrovascular disease which may take place over the next few years. With the aid of workers prominent in the field the development of thought and knowledge about intra- and extra-cranial vascular disease is traced from historical times until about mid-1982. It is this that makes this book different from the seemingly ever-increasing number of publications under the general heading of strokes. It is not a series of individuals describing their particular views on aetiology or mechanisms, or the results of their particular inconclusive multicentre trial of therapy, but a series of reviews, by critical yet receptive authors, of the work that has been, and is, going on throughout the world. These reviews highlight the pitfalls many investigators may fall into, and the difficulties inherent in bringing different people, different hospitals, and different countries into one supposedly unified study. The bibliography on which the chapters are based is excellent, indeed at times awe-inspiring. Two chapters (blood-flow and cerebral metabolism, and on the pathophysiology of cerebral ischaemia) combine their references which number just under 500. In addition to these the first part of the book—"fundamental concepts"—considers the nature of atheroma, its relationship to cerebro-vascular disease,

epidemiology, and the influence of hypertension. Hypertension does at least appear to be unanimously accepted as a vital influence in strokes, which is more than can be said for most other deviations from the normal, but the question is raised whether we are too obsessed with the diastolic pressure, when marked variations in the systolic may in this context be of more immediate relevance. In the clinical section, those reviewing trials of preventative therapy all appear to be waiting the results of further trials, and it becomes abundantly clear how important it is to know the natural history of strokes and cerebrovascular disease generally. The un-natural history as one of the editors terms it, for it is almost impossible to obtain a series of cases which are not in some way influenced by therapeutic attempts, is still far from established, and even more difficult, is changing, so that "the very soil is moving" beneath the feet of the investigators, and this of course is particularly relevant to some glowing accounts that have appeared of methods of prophylaxis and treatment, particularly in the sphere of surgical reconstruction or anastomosis. The authors go to considerable lengths to avoid falling into this trap and review the very wide range of methods of investigation available, and indications for them, their limitations and possible hazards, and the action, medical or surgical, that should or should not follow the results, and these chapters should be studied very carefully. I still find myself slightly bemused by the terms invasive, and non-invasive. Are we so sure that subjecting our neurons to string magnetic fields is non-invasive? Having recently had to sign a document certifying that I was not wearing an intra-uterine contraceptive device before being admitted to the Presence of a new NMR machine, I sometimes wonder. Ischaemia however is not the only topic dealt with in detail in this book, for chapters are devoted to venous infarction, intracerebral haematoma, and subarachnoid haemorrhage. The importance of evacuation of cerebellar haematoma, and the use of stereotactic methods in deep thalamic stem haematoma, *in appropriate patients*, are emphasised, and the doubts as to the value of anti-fibrinolytic agents in the prevention of re-bleeding in subarachnoid haemorrhages are justifiably brought to the fore.

It is a very distinguished team who have co-operated to write this book, which has miraculously avoided the repetitiveness so often found in multi-authorship publications, and this must be a credit to the

editors. It is perhaps a little too detailed for the general reader, but for the neurologist, neurosurgeon, and vascular surgeon, it is compulsive, and some might think, compulsory reading.

EDWIN R BICKERSTAFF

The Affective Disorders. Edited by John M Davis and James W Mass. (Pp 443; \$27.50.) Washington: American Psychiatric Press Inc, 1983

This is the proceedings of yet another drug company sponsored conference on depression. In this case the company was Upjohn and the meeting took place in Kalamazoo, Michigan in October 1981. Doubtless the conference was enjoyable and even valuable to the participants themselves. But it is not worth reading about two years later. Those of the sixty contributors with something important to say had either published elsewhere before the conference was held or have done so by now. Anyone who happens to glance through this particular volume will learn that the mode of action of tricyclic antidepressants is still a mystery, and that the best treatment to give someone with a severe depression which has failed to respond to an adequate trial both of a tricyclic drug and of ECT is still anyone's guess. He will also be somewhat disconcerted to learn that if affective disorders are genetically transmitted they should be more prevalent in monozygous than dizygous twins, and the Kallmann's old twin study is still considered "the definitive work" in the field of affective disorder. If you want accurate and up to date information about affective disorders read Paykel's Handbook instead.

R E KENDELL

Neuropsychological Assessment. Second Edition. By MD Lezak. (Pp 768; £22.50.) New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

This is a much expanded and up-dated version of the first edition which was published in 1976. The first 240 pages are devoted to what is probably the most detailed and comprehensive account currently available of the theory and practice of neuropsychological assessment. In addition to fairly standard chapters on neuroanatomy and neuropathology, there are sections dealing with the rationale of deficit measurement and the procedures and interpretation involved in neuropsychological examinations, which have a great deal to