
A multitude of texts on anorexia nervosa have appeared in recent years, many of them circumstanced in their approach or aimed primarily at the lay reader. This book comes from Canada and is both more ambitious and more substantial.

The authors write with the authority derived from having themselves made important research contributions to the subject. Among their best known work is a carefully designed study on the prevalence of anorexia nervosa in ballet students and fashion models. They found a high frequency (7%) of the illness among young women in these two occupational groups. This is the best evidence so far that increased attention to acquiring a slim body increases the risk of anorexia nervosa. The obvious implication of this finding is that cultural attitudes which promote thinness in women as an aesthetic ideal have played a part in the increased incidence of anorexia nervosa during the past thirty years or so. In another reported study the authors asked anorexic girls to estimate their body size by the use of a projected photograph which could be distorted along its horizontal axis. A proportion of them overestimated their body size, an observation which was a strong predictor of a poor prognosis.

The authors’ personal studies form a small but important part of this book which surveys broadly the clinical and experimental research which has exploded into print in recent years. The main strength of this survey is the balanced analysis of present knowledge in anorexia nervosa derived from several hundred sources which are succinctly and carefully reviewed. From this analysis emerges a theoretical model of anorexia nervosa as a multi-dimensional disorder. Whereas its exact causation remains unknown, there occurs an interplay of forces contributing to its genesis. This approach enables the authors to review side by side causal factors pertaining to the individual patient, her family and her social environment. Having been initiated, the illness is sustained through self-perpetuating mechanisms including the patient’s disturbed thinking, secondary gain or the starvation itself. Justice is also done to the role of physical and biochemical factors, with an appropriate emphasis on disordered hypothalamic function which gives rise to the symptom of amenorrhoea in anorexia nervosa. In the authors’ view the hypothalamic disturbances are generally reversible.

A most valuable feature of this book is the detailed discussion of patient management which ranges from hospital treatment to different psychotherapeutic approaches. A detailed account is given of “reality-oriented feedback”, a term used to describe the method of helping patients to become more aware of what they are doing, feeling and thinking. The aim of this treatment is to correct their distorted sense of reality.

The style of this book is clear and direct. There are several useful diagrams and tables, and the bibliography is full. For the reader who wishes to learn about recent advances in the understanding of anorexia nervosa and bulimic disorders, this book is unrivalled. The discussion of practical therapeutic measures also makes it valuable to the practising clinician.

GERALD RUSSELL


This is a completely new and comprehensive text book on the application of computed tomography to the extracranial regions of the body. The editors and the many contributors are all associated with The Edward Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology, Washington University School of Medicine, St Louis, Missouri. Each contributor has established his own interests and expertise in a specific area and yet the whole book has been blended together to give an overall picture of the way in which computed tomography has become a vital and integral part of the diagnosis and management of patients in that Institute, which was one of the two centres chosen in the United States for the clinical evaluation of the prototype EMI Body Scanner (the EMI 5000).

Dr Ronald G. Evens, Chairman of the Department of Radiology, introduces the book with a short historical review of computed tomography and its role in modern medical care. He has also written the final chapter on the economics and politics of computed tomography in which he stresses that studies of the efficacy and the economic value of new technologies should be started at the same time as medical studies in order that they should receive public acceptance; a lesson learned from CT experience. There is a short chapter on the physical principles and instrumentation involved and a longer one on techniques in which there is a comprehensive description of image manipulation, the use of contrast medium and advice on CT guided interventional procedures such as needle biopsy and the drainage of abscesses. Detailed protocols are given for thirteen different regions of interest. These are intended to serve as guidelines and to provide a basic approach that can be further modified according to the clinical question to be answered and the findings of the initial scan.

The main part of the book is divided into chapters dealing with individual organs or anatomical regions. There are also chapters on paediatric applications, comparative imaging and radiation oncology. Throughout the book the normal anatomy with common variations is clearly described, usually as seen in sequential scans. The main indications for computed tomography are discussed together with the limitations of the technique and its relationship to other forms of radiology.

Throughout the book the illustrations are of the highest quality and are produced at about the same size as the scans are normally viewed on hard copy in clinical practice. The illustrations are well annotated and the long captions fully explain the points being illustrated. There is a full list of references at the end of each chapter.

This authoritative and impeccably produced book is made all the more valuable through being produced by a team which has a uniform approach to the practice and problems of computed tomography. Although it is intended primarily for use by the radiologist, other clinicians would benefit from the understanding about the relative value and indications for computed tomography of the body which this book imparts. It can serve equally well as a text book or a reference book and is highly recommended to all those interested in computed tomography.

JW LAWNS


This volume contains papers presented at a satellite symposium of the International Brain Research Organization, Mannheim, 1982. The contributors are distinguished...