Practice of Spinal Surgery. By Henry V Crock. (Pp 319; \$88.50.) Vienna: Springer-Verlag, 1983.

This is a handsome addition to the literature on spinal surgery, as might be expected from a production of the Springer-Verlag publishing house. The clearly laid out text is printed on high quality paper, and the abundant illustrations, whether radiological, in colour or in line, are of the highest possible standard.

Unfortunately, much of the text disappoints the expectations raised by first holding the book in one's hands. In saying this one must make an exception of the last two chapters, on the management of spinal injuries, written by Sir George Bedbrook, Senior Orthopaedic Surgeon at the Royal Perth Hospital. These contain a clear and beautifully written exposition of the subject, apparently based on considerable experience, that might be read with profit by every neurosurgeon and orthopaedic surgeon.

The greater part of the book is devoted to the diagnosis and surgical management of some of the degenerative conditions of the vertebral column. However, this reviewer found much that he did not find entirely satisfactory. Although individual sections were clear, he found much of the book confusing to read. The problem appeared to be that basic questions of the mechanism of symptom production, the role that surgery can play, and the indications for different types of surgical treatment, are not discussed in a fashion which is easily understood. Many neurosurgeons will find much that they cannot agree with—for instance 60 pages are devoted to an entity called "internal disc disruption". This condition appears from its clinical description to correspond to a number of categories of low back pain of obscure origin, for which the principle author would appear to advocate a much more active surgical approach that many spinal surgeons would find acceptable. He also states that frank disc protrusions are rare and that he has encountered only four cases amongst 150 consecutive cases requiring spinal surgery over a 6 month period. It must be clear from this statement that the author does not adhere to the belief which is virtually universal amongst British neurosurgeons, that surgery has only a very limited role to play in the management of degenerative disease of the spine. There is only very limited discussion of the vitally important question of the interaction of organic and non-organic fac-

tors in the presentation of spinal degenerative disease, apart from some comment on the acute psychiatric disturbances which may follow radical surgery for "internal disc disruption". The discussion of the experience of other workers in the literature is probably not quite adequate for a book of this type. Despite some useful information and first class illustrations, this reviewer is doubtful whether this book can be recommended to those with an interest in spinal surgery although it probably has a useful place in the reference library.

RS MAURICE-WILLIAMS

Cognitive Rehabilitation: Conceptualization and Intervention. Edited by Lance E Trexler. (Pp 280; \$37.50.) New York: Plenum Publishing Corporation, 1982.

A book on the subject of cognitive rehabilitation is very welcome—given the importance of the subject and the relative paucity of published work. This volume represents the Proceedings of a Conference held in January 1981. There are thirteen contributors, of whom ten came from the USA and the remaining three from Israel. The contributors are mainly psychologists, although there is one occupational therapist. There are no contributions from neurologists, or indeed, from the medical profession.

There are three sections: an introduction, a section on Conceptualising Cognitive Dysfunction and a final section entitled 'Intervention Strategies'. I found the last section particularly interesting. The first four introductory chapters include a section on neuropsychological assessment. In many ways this is rather elementary but represents a useful introduction to the subject. It is interesting that psychologists are trying to quantify motor performance by, for example, assessing the speed of finger and foot tapping. William Lynch in Chapter 4 gives a good account of the emotional difficulties which can follow brain damage—although it is not always possible to ascertain whether the author is talking about head injury or stroke.

Section 2 consists of six chapters including one by Eugene Piasetsky on the mechanisms of recovery in the damaged central nervous system. There is a long but perceptive section by Hagen from San Diego on language—cognitive disorganisation following closed head injury.

The last section entitled 'Intervention Strategies' includes a particularly good chapter by Piasetsky, Ben-Yishay, Wein-

berg, and Diller, on methods for re-training specific deficits—notably the spatial and other disorders associated with right hemisphere damage and the problems of alertness and attention which many patients with severe closed head injury experience. The last chapter deals with the use of electronic games in rehabilitation—which can be used both for training and assessment.

I found this an interesting and stimulating book. However, some of the sections are rather uncritical and provide little firm evidence that rehabilitation techniques are effective. Some contributors do not seem to realise the major problem of separating natural recovery from the effects of therapy. This is an exciting and rapidly expanding field, and the book can be recommended as a worthwhile contribution which will stimulate thought.

R LANGTON HEWER

Chronic Toxicity of Antiepileptic Drugs. Edited by Jolyon Oxley, Dieter Janz, Harry Meinardi. (Pp 318; \$43.00.) New York: Raven Press, 1983.

The results of a symposium held at the Chalfont Centre for Epilepsy in August 1982, on the chronic toxicity of antiepileptic drugs are represented by this book. The contents are organised into a number of sections dealing with hepatic, haematological, immunological, connective tissue, bone metabolism and cerebellar and other motor disorders. The first article in each section is a general review of the subject, and at the end of each section an expert on the field in question, but from outside the world of epileptology, has been asked to comment on the papers presented, and lead a discussion. Such an interdisciplinary approach is attractive in principle, but one feels a certain communication gap remains!

The largest section deals with hepatotoxicity and begins with a useful general review of hepatotoxicity associated with a number of anticonvulsant drugs. This has the virtue of being comprehensive but is then followed by three papers dealing specifically with the hepatotoxicity of valproic acid. (Whilst the subject is topical the more cynical might wonder whether this special emphasis was in any way related to the sponsorship of the meeting?) The section on haematological disorders contains specific articles on the haematological side effects of valproate and the contribution of