Book reviews

Hypertensive Intracerebral Hemorrhage. Edited by Masahiro Mizukami, Haruyuki Kanaya, Kyuya Kogure and Yukio Yamori. (Pp 272; \$53.50.) New York: Raven Press, 1983.

The title of this multi-author volume is misleading. Other aspects of cerebral vascular disease are discussed, including aneurysms, arterio-venous malformations and balloon closure techniques; and transient ischaemic attacks and indications for endarterectomy. Thalamic haemorrhage is graded according to its extension in neighbouring areas, but most British neurosurgeons would agree that there is little place for their surgical removal. No mention is made of that most intractable complication, thalamic pain. However, most chapters usefully review their subject and the references are up to date.

JOHN ANDREW

Electroencephalography: Basic Principles, Clinical Applications and Related Fields. Edited by Ernst Niedermeyer & Fernando Lopes da Silva. (Pp 751; £58.00.) Baltimore: Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1982.

This single, large textbook is the result of collaboration between the two principal authors and 23 other contributors, drawn almost exclusively from North America and continental Europe. The first several chapters concern themselves with the neurophysiological basis of the EEG signal, its recording, and suggested designs for EEG laboratories. Neurophysiological and mathematical principles are given in depth, though some readers may find the amalgam of technical, American and northern European idiom, in a few of these early sections, difficult to digest.

The next and largest part of the book discusses the normal EEG, specific and non-specific abnormal EEG patterns and then there are several chapters related to different neurological and psychiatric conditions. I suspect that for most people, these will be the chapters they will turn to most frequently. They are clearly written, in simple English, the references are copious, and in some cases vast. In particular they offer clinical knowledge and wisdom based on the contributors' years of experience. The illustrations are generally excellent so it is all the more annoying that some indistinct examples remain, but then only

from one or two contributors. Obviously in a textbook of electroencephalography, every EEG example must be crystal clear, and the next edition should put this right. We are warned in the preface that no effort has been made to achieve the strictest standardisation of symbols and terminology, e.g. 10 cps or 10 Hz, and nearly every EEG example is given in the American format of left before right.

The remainder of the book deals briefly with special fields and related techniques, and includes compact discussion on event-related potentials and their clinical evaluation, polygraphy, sleep and sleep disorders, and three pages on the EEG in aviation, space exploration and diving!

This large and comprehensive text is firmly recommended, notwithstanding the few limitations noted above. Neurologists, neurophysiologists and technical staff alike, should find it a helpful and valuable companion.

NP SHEEHY

Epilepsy Guide: Diagnosis and Treatment of Epileptic Seizure Disorders. By Ernst Niedermeyer. (Pp 245; £14.95.) Baltimore: Urban & Schwarzenberg; UK Distrib: Pitman Books Ltd, 1983.

This is a concise, individual, American view of epilepsy and its treatment. It is divided into two sections the first of which deals with the diagnosis of epilepsy, the classification of seizures and epilepsies, and their differentiation from other episodes of altered consciousness. The second deals with the treatment of seizure disorders concentrating on drug therapy but with short chapters on neurosurgical and other forms of treatment.

The style is somewhat terse and dogmatic. Use is made of some line drawings to illustrate seizure classification but these tend to be crude, and convey very little of the dynamic nature of the motor components of particular seizure types. Throughout the book major points are emphasised by the use of tables which vary in their effectiveness. A reasonable example of this is a four line table at the end of the book.

"The essence of this book.

Find a proper diagnostic category,
Treat adequately.

Avoid chronic toxic states."

The book certainly contains a large amount of useful information for physicians without a specific interest in neurology or epilepsy, and the information is presented in a style which is easily absorbed. How-

ever, the didactic style fails to emphasise areas of relative uncertainty which are replaced by the author's conviction that his own personal approach to a problem is the correct one. The book reflects a generally American outlook and there are some statements which would certainly raise the eyebrows of many European neurologists and epileptologists. This is particularly reflected in an enthusiasm for the investigation of patients with epilepsy which reflects the luxurious provision of investigational facilities in the United States. It is suggested that "every epileptic with an onset of seizures past the age of 10 years should have a CT scan". The relatively low yield of such a policy in terms of the identification of treatable progressive structural pathology is not emphasised nor are the clinical and electroencephalographic criteria that significantly increase the proportion of scans identifying structural lesions. Such blind investigational enthusiasm will be beyond the economic scope of many European centres.

In contrast the section on therapy reflects the possibly outdated views of anticonvulsant therapy resulting from the highly protective policy of the American FDA. The author is clearly aware that there is little in the way of scientific evidence to differentiate between the efficacy of many anticonvulsant drugs, but continues to prefer anecdotal evidence about the indications for the use of particular drugs. Some of his preferences will be regarded as idiosyncratic by European authorities. As an example is the clear preference to ethosuximide as opposed to valproate in the treatment of petit mal seizures, and a somewhat surprising preference for primidone over carbamazepine in the treatment of complex partial seizures.

Whilst the book is concise and comprehensive and gives an interesting insight into American practice, its relevance to the management of the epileptic patient on this side of the Atlantic may be slightly questionable.

DW CHADWICK

Life Sciences Research Report 24. Repair and Regeneration of the Nervous System. Edited by JG Nicholls. (Pp 411; \$23.10.) Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1982.

This volume comprises a series of review papers on a range of topics relevant to repair and regeneration of both peripheral and central nervous systems from molecu-