Book reviews

Child Neuropsychology. An Introduction to Theory, Research, and Clinical Practice. By Byron P Rourke, Dirk J Bakker, John L Fisk and John D Strang. (Pp 389; £26.50.) London: The Guildford Press, 1983.

The past few years has seen the publication of a number of texts on developmental neuropsychology, indicating that this area is recognised as worthy of specialist study. This text results from the collaboration of researchers in Amsterdam (DJB) and Windsor, Ontario. It is aimed at advanced students in clinical and school psychology, and related professionals in special education.

The first four chapters review brain development and brain-behaviour relationships, paying particular attention to lateralisation of function and plasticity. The diagrams will be useful to beginners. The authors caution against generalising findings from adult neuropsychology and from studies of damaged brains to normal child development, but frequently forget their own warnings.

Chapter five reviews neuropsychological assessment, at least as practiced by the authors. They see the main aim of such assessment as the description of brain-behaviour relationships. They seem to be less interested in diagnosis or remediation, indeed they coyly view "diagnosis" as a solely medical prerogative, although later they unconvincingly argue the need for a new profession of child neuropsychologists, separate from clinical psychologists. They favour a most unusual approach to assessment: all children, irrespective of presenting problems, are administered a day-long battery of tests (mainly the Halstead-Reitan pot-pourri) by "psychometrists". The test results are then interpreted by the neuropsychologists "blind" to the history and other data. This approach might be justifiable in a strict experimental evaluation to ascertain the validity of the battery's contribution to overall diagnosis and care, but it is clearly wasteful in ordinary clinical practice. Indeed, the 21 case examples (described by the dust jacket as "superb") merely serve to illustrate how redundant this type of neuropsychology is to diagnosis and treatment.

Chapter six addresses remediation. It is unclear what neuropsychology adds to good clinical psychology in this area. The authors are aware of the dilemma of special education: whether to teach through exist-

ing skills or to try to bolster up deficits. They note that children with higher IQs have better prognoses. They talk of the need to help parents and become over-inclusive to the point of recommending psychotherapy. Much of the advice is non-specific and stated in unhelpful generalities. They say little about behavioural management of seizures, the value of the Doman-Delacato approach, conductive education, augmentative communication systems or the place of new information technology, all of current concern in the rehabilitation of children with CNS impairment. Rather, they fall back on the wisdom of the 1940s: the need for limiting sensory input, for structuring the environment and the like. In many of the case examples, the remedial prescription amounts to placing the child in special class or special school as if there were no moves in special education towards integrated schooling.

Having read this text carefully, I am no clearer what this type of neuropsychology has to offer the clinician. Nowhere is there any discussion of its relationship to paediatric neurological examinations nor to modern CT and PET scans. Is the task of neuropsychology to diagnose problems, to screen for more expensive diagnostic procedures, to describe functions associated with lesions determined by other methods, or what? Somewhere along the transformation from phrenology to neuropsychology, the "critical faculty" has been mislaid. This style of neuropsychology seems unrelated to the very real needs of neurologically disabled children.

WILLIAM YULE

Neurologic Differential Diagnosis. By Mark Mumenthaler. Translated by Otto Appenzeller. (Pp 157; DM 68.00.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag, 1985.

This short and concise book was first published in 1925, and has now been brought out in an excellent English translation. In the sixty years since the book was first written, clinical neurology has undergone enormous changes, and the relevance of such a book to the present day needs examining. In general it stands up well to this examination.

With the advent of CT scanning and other imaging techniques do we need the classical clinical skills of history taking, examination and knowledge of neuro anatomy, neurophysiology and neuropathology? Indeed, is there any need for the committed full time neurologist or can he be replaced by a scan-

ner? Part of the answer to this proposition has been in the fact that the rapid advances in the treatment of diseases of the nervous system have converted neurology from the largely diagnostic and prognostic specialty that it was sixty years ago, into a major therapeutic specialty. But this book serves as a valuable reminder that clinical skills remain essential in the diagnosis of the vast majority of neurological diseases while scanning is helpful only in the minority and crucial even less frequently.

Mumenthaler's *Neurologic Differential Diagnosis* takes major symptoms and signs and then considers their differential diagnosis. It is well set out with excellent diagrams and tables. It is written for the physician who has acquired the skills of history taking and examination, rather than the clinical student. In parts it remains orientated towards the pre-scanning era of neurology where, for example, it lists the twenty named brainstem syndromes (from Avellis' syndrome to Vermet's syndrome): or in describing the anatomical localisation of hemisphere lesions. But in the sections on disorders of equilibrium, involuntary movement, mononeuropathies or back pain (to select just a few) the description and discussion is elegant, informative and relevant to clinical practice. For the postgraduate student of whatever age, this book will provide a classification over the whole range of clinical neurology and reminds one of possibilities in diagnosis that may have been overlooked and which will frequently not be revealed by scanning techniques. This is a valuable addition to the bookshelf of aspiring and established physicians and neurologists.

RB GODWIN-AUSTEN

Mental Handicap. (Current Reviews in Psychiatry Volume 1.) By Oliver Russell. (Pp 220; £12.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1984.

This introductory monograph of a new series, *Current Reviews in Psychiatry*, edited by Professors Eugene Paykel and Gethin Morgan bodes well for future volumes in this series.

The editors point out in their foreword that the scope of psychiatry is wide and expansion in the base of knowledge in recent years has been impressive. No longer do we live in the age of the polymath author of standard textbooks of psychiatry. This is evident in the poor quality of the mandatory chapter on the "Psychiatry of Mental Handicap" in many such texts.

Expansion of the knowledge base has been

at least as impressive, recently, in the field of mental handicap and Dr Russell's book provides a refreshing contemporary account of these advances. It will be compulsive reading for established practitioners, particularly those with responsibility for teaching medical students and for postgraduate trainees in general psychiatry. These include studies of epidemiology and prevalence, the fragile X syndrome, autism and childhood psychoses. They also cover the resurgence of interest in family processes and the role of the psychiatrist in treatment.

Perhaps the weakness, if any, is failure to relate the earlier scientific advances for example in epidemiology to the final section on policy and planning of services but this is a minor criticism of a book which may be otherwise thoroughly recommended.

JA CORBETT

Evoked Potentials II. The Second International Evoked Potentials Symposium. Edited by Richard H Nodar and Colin Barber. (Pp 711; £82.00.) Sevenoaks: The Butterworth Group, 1985.

This volume contains 80 of the papers presented at the second international evoked potentials symposium held in Cleveland, USA in 1982. Reviewers of such works express reservations concerning the variable quality of contributions and the existence of more detailed and authoritative accounts in the scientific journals. I will not therefore bore the reader by reiterating these inevitable criticisms of a work of this kind.

The contents are structured according to which sensory system is studied and whether the data concern normal subjects or clinical applications. There are important additional sections on Background and Perspective; Measurement and Analysis; Psychological Correlates; Drug and Metabolic Effects and Monitoring and Multimodal Application of Evoked Potentials. The quoted references are all collected into a 48 page penultimate section which must avoid some repetition but deprives those readers who do not read papers from A to Z of an important means of assessing a paper. The index has been thoroughly prepared.

Here and there one finds the book touched by scholarship, particularly among the experimental papers which use evoked potential techniques to test neurophysiological hypotheses. It is a matter of regret that many clinical papers merely describe abnormalities seen in this disease or that, with only the weakest intellectual effort to relate findings to the pathophysiology of

neurological disease or to the clinical usefulness of the test. Happily there are exceptions to this statement and WB Matthews chapter entitled "How do evoked potentials help the clinician?" should be read by everyone concerned with patients. His question is everyone's question and we should all make better efforts to answer it.

Those interested in technical developments will find papers on a variety of techniques of stimulation, recording and analysis including magnetic field recording and topographical analysis. One curiosity is a paper describing the effects of magnetic fields on visual evoked potential, a topic which will be of interest to those involved in magnetic resonance scanning.

Nearly all readers will find something of interest in this book but the cost is high and a lot has happened in the exciting world of evoked potentials since these papers were written in 1982.

EDM SEDGWICK

The Biochemistry of Migraine. By MJ Eadie and JH Tyrer. (Pp 216; £39.50.) Lancaster: MTP Press Ltd. 1985.

The book is divided into four unequal parts. The clinical aspects of the subject are necessarily considered first, and although brief, are adequately covered in the first 39 pages. The second, and most important aspect and relevant to the title of the book, deals with the reported biochemical changes in relation to migraine. This is a very comprehensive review of the roles of serotonin, catecholamines, histamine, bradykinin and prostaglandins. Precipitating factors are also reviewed including glucose changes, circulating free fatty acid levels, various amines, and sex hormones. GABA cAMP, enkephalins and endorphins, amongst others, are considered under the heading of the biochemical consequences of migraine. The effect of exogenous substances on migraine are also considered. The third part of the book is concerned with pathogenesis, and considers some of the well documented hypotheses, but does not offer anything new. Finally, there is a short chapter on cluster headache.

The authors also include a chapter on suggested future investigations, clinical physiological as well as biochemical. Throughout the book the list of references is very comprehensive and makes it a very useful addition to medical libraries, although the cost may seem high for practising clinicians for whom it is intended.

KJ ZILKHA

Dysphagia: Diagnosis and Management. Edited by Michael E Groher. (Pp 258; £37.50.) Sevenoaks: Butterworth Group, 1984.

This is a valuable small book dealing comprehensively with a symptom whose import spreads over many disciplines. Nine contributors deal with the anatomical and physiological control of swallowing, neurological disorders causing its disturbance, and mechanical disabilities producing dysphagia. The most important sections concern the management of swallowing disorders. As is often the case in American medical practice, a collaborative multidisciplinary approach is emphasised. There will be many ways in which the organisation of care of patients with dysphagia in this country would be different, but the book serves a very useful purpose by acquainting workers in one field such as neurology with the contributions that can be made, say, by otolaryngologists. This team approach is no bad thing in concept, and the promotion of better understanding of what others have to offer is well worthwhile.

I do believe that anyone dealing with patients troubled by dysphagia will find useful advice in this work. The book is slightly marred by the mediocre quality of the paper which does not do justice to any of the half-tone illustrations. The references are comprehensive but the index is rather skimpy.

HAROLD LUDMAN