Book reviews

Neurology: The Physician's Guide. Edited by Robert G Feldman. (Pp 276; DM98.00.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag, 1984.

In this well produced paperback Prof Feldman has produced a series of neurological essays for general medical practitioners. Each of the 16 chapters is written by a neurologist, many from the esteemed Boston University School of Medicine. The topics have been chosen on the basis of the frequency of presentation in the general practice of medicine.

With this aim in view, the selection is a good one. Epilepsy, sleep disorders and states of altered consciousness, follow an oversimplified introductory chapter on the clinical assessment and a brief statement on neuroradiological procedures. Dizziness, headache, cerebrovascular disease, Parkinsonism, alcoholism and multiple sclerosis are covered in turn. The editor's special choices are chapters on environmental and occupational neurology, neurological complications of pregnancy and common neurological problems in childhood.

It is not easy to know whether the subject matter will educate and inform those for whom it is intended. Many of the contributions are simply short eclectic accounts, differing but little from textbook information. The standard varies inevitably, both in content and style. A number of loose, wooly statements diminish the reader's interest. Does it help anyone to say about monotherapy for epilepsy "... complete seizure control in 31 to 80% of patients. . ." or "therapy should be maintained for 2 to 5 years after the diagnosis." Well, which?! The chapter on headache opens with the stunning observation "Pain is a private experience. As such it is intrinsically unknowable to an observer." In an otherwise excellent short chapter on cerebrovascular disease Phillip Wolf gives the generalist little guidance on treatment with aspirin and anticoagulants, nor is the controversial thromboendarterectomy discussed. Rosman gives a fine account (reprinted from another article) on inattention and overactivity, then gives rather brief descriptions of seizures and head injury in childhood; but there is no mention of the many other common disorders falling under the chapter heading "Common Neurologic Problems in Childhood". I enjoyed both these chapters, and was impressed by the ones on sleep disorder

(George F Howard) and multiple sclerosis (Charles Posers).

With its neoteric preoccupation with investigation, I think this volume may succeed in the USA, but though I know of no British book addressing this audience I doubt whether British GPs or general physicians would find that it caters for their neurological needs. The idea is a good one however, and I hope that it achieves a second edition which might confront more specific practical problems and give more didactic advice rather than depend on discursive essays. Attention might be paid to the more common peripheral nerve palsies and spinal cord diseases which are barely mentioned.

JMS PEARCE

Neurosurgery. 3 Volumes. Edited by Robert H Wilkins and Setti S Rengachary. (Pp 2816; £450.) Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Book Co (UK) Ltd, 1985.

How should one reviewer attempt to do justice to a work of this size (Weight 5.5 kg; Pages nearly 3000) produced by over 400 authors and covering the whole field of neurologic surgery? Can it be done? If the work were inferior, it would be easy to dismiss it. That this one is excellent is more difficult to explain in a short review. Firstly, the more superficial qualities are impressive. In spite of its total weight, each of the three volumes is (as is sometimes said of a motor car or a horse) "easy to handle". The binding will survive much usage, the paper and printing are a joy and the quality of the half-tone and line drawings throughout is admirable. I used the book as long as I dared before supplying this review. The categories of enquiry I chose were firstly matters about which I knew nothing and, secondly, those few where I thought I knew a lot. In the first group I was never disappointed and felt confident that I had learnt the essential aspects. In the second, I found little or nothing to fault. The references seem to have been properly pruned and selected and are therefore not very numerous. The 80-page index is skillfully arranged as it should be in such an encyclopaedic work. One lengthy appendix provides the essential details of drugs commonly used in neurological surgery, while another provides the range of values for commonly performed laboratory tests. Most impressive is the way in which the two editors have secured a uniformly high standard of style and pre-

sentation from their enormous team of authors.

There remains the inevitable question for whom is the work intended? I have little doubt that it will be on the shelves of every Board candidate in North America as I believe there is nothing to compare with it for reliable up-to-date information over a wide field. In my opinion it should be in every neurosurgical departmental library worldwide in spite of the capital outlay, which nevertheless will be well worthwhile.

KENNETH THOMAS

The Right Hemisphere: Neurology and Neuropsychology. (*Monographs in Neuroscience, Volume 1.*) Edited by Alfred Ardila and Peggy Ostrosky-Solis. (Pp 277; \$58.00.) New York: Gordon & Breach Inc, 1984.

The Right Hemisphere is a further addition to the expanding list of books which deal with the nature of cerebral specialisation. It is also the first volume of a *Neuroscience Series* edited by S Weinstein which aims at bringing together work dealing with new specialisations and new technologies.

The book contains 12 contributions under three main headings:— basic problems, clinical considerations and experimental evidence. Some of the papers present new research on specific topics. For instance, there is a paper on the effects of right hemisphere lesions in rats and another on event-related potentials and hemispheric specialisation. Other papers summarise evidence for a particular theoretical position. For example the brief chapter by Le Douarin deals with the role played by the inferior parietal region in primitive communication systems. The majority of the papers give summaries or reviews on various topics without attempting to take a special theoretical stand.

The main shortcoming of the volume is a lack of balance on the choice of topics. For instance, five out of the 12 chapters deal with some aspects of language function. They cover subjects such as the right hemisphere participation of language, the disturbances of emotional language with right hemisphere lesions and cross aphasia in dextrals. There is also a psycho-linguistic review dealing with right hemisphere function and language development. By contrast, other important functions of the right hemisphere, for example, visuo-spatial abilities, face perception and perception and recognition of musical passages, are

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barely mentioned.

The book contains little that can be of interest to those working in the field of cerebral specialization of cognitive functions. Those who may benefit from this publication are students being initiated in the field of neuro-psychology.

M WYKE

Functions of the Right Cerebral Hemisphere. Edited by Andrew W Young. (Pp 235; \$38.00.) London: Academic Press Inc, 1984.

This multi-authored volume provides quite a useful review of our present knowledge of many of the functions of the right cerebral hemisphere. The book is written by neuropsychologists and is naturally concerned with those topics that have been most amenable to current methods of neuropsychological analysis. There are for example individual chapters dealing with visuospatial abilities, facial perception, music and language capabilities of the right hemisphere. Conspicuously, emotion, affect and from the pathological point of view, neglect and denial are omitted or barely mentioned. The book is certainly a worthwhile source of reference for the neurologist who needs up-dating on the neuropsychological aspects of those topics which it covers and which in the main are well reviewed. For all but a few however it will be for reference only.

JOHN MEADOWS

Differential Diagnosis in Neuropsychiatry. By Jeremy K A Roberts. (Pp 377; £17.00.) Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1984.

Dr Roberts, a British-trained psychiatrist working in Canada, has written a book that attempts, as its title asserts, to approach neuropsychiatry with a particular regard to the problems of examination, investigation and differential diagnosis. Almost inevitably, given the complexities of his subject, the book has ended up rather more than that and closer to a standard medium sized textbook of neuropsychiatry with its chapters organised in terms of syndromes rather

than disease entities. Thus, after introductory sections on history taking, mental state evaluation and neurological examination and on investigatory techniques, there follow chapters on aggression, delirium, dementia, catatonia and stupor, and so on. The book is rounded off by a series of case studies in neuropsychiatry.

There is certainly a need for a comprehensive but not over long neuropsychiatry primer. This book, in spite of its particular formula, may for the moment meet such a need but not without a few reservations. Recent published works in particular receive good coverage but are often quoted rather uncritically. There is at times a little too much theoretical speculation for a book the purpose of which is essentially practical and clinical. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, edition 3 (DSM 3) is a pervasive presence throughout the book. This is not altogether a bad thing; as a diagnostic classification it has much more to offer than the ICD; but the transatlantic addiction to operative definitions has led to a proliferation of unfamiliar syndromes and acronyms, some inappropriately grandiose for example the Central Anticholinergic Syndrome (CAS), others slightly comical, such as the Isolated Explosive Disorder.

This is to dwell overmuch on the less satisfactory aspects of the book. By and large it achieves the aims set out by the author. It provides a condensed and informed account of its subject that will be of value both to the MRC Psych examinees and to the junior doctors confronted by diagnostic dilemmas.

BK TOONE

Advances in Epileptology. The XVth Epilepsy International Symposium. Edited by Roger J Porter, Richard H Mattson, Arthur A Ward Jr & Mogens Dam. (Pp 709; \$142.00.) New York: Raven Press, 1984.

This volume includes a wide selection of topics based on the XVth Epilepsy International Symposium held in Washington, DC in September 1983. It contains 113 contributions (chosen from the 450 presented at the meeting) and (as one might expect) almost half of them emanate from the United States.

The chapters have been arranged in 14 sections starting with basic studies on neurotransmitters, and the emission tomography. The section on antiepileptic drug binding includes sceptical views about

the value of monitoring free levels. Sections follow on the disposition of drugs and hormones during pregnancy, and then on teratogenesis, clinical trials and surgery. The last three sections on employability, the government's role in epilepsy prevention and treatment and in providing support services, and the establishment of a National Epilepsy Resource Center are well worth reading.

Although the volume brings together a great deal of useful information, it is really rather a jumble of disconnected contributions, not all of which have been placed under their appropriate section headings and many have already been published elsewhere. True there is something here for most who want to know what research on epilepsy has been going on but it is difficult to see the justification for publishing so much on such varied topics at such a ridiculously high price.

Those interested in the history of the scientific meetings sponsored by the international epilepsy community since the International League Against Epilepsy was established in Budapest in 1909 should turn to the fascinating review by JJ Cereghino tucked away in the middle of the book towards the end of a section misleadingly labelled *Clinical Aspects of Epilepsy*. In conclusion we read that the 1983 congress represents the last of the annual Epilepsy International symposia which are to be replaced by an International Congress every 2 years. So the XVIth EI Symposium is to be held in Hamburg in September 1985. Let us hope, if publication of its proceedings is considered necessary, that more thought is given to ensure that the format and content come out of orbit and the cost spirals down to earth.

MICHAEL ESPIR

Head and Neck Injuries in Sports. By Stephen E Reid & Stephen E Reid Jr. Also Stephen E Long & Gil Raviv. (Pp 198; \$27.00.) Illinois: Charles C Thomas, 1984.

The title is somewhat misleading as this book is largely concerned with head and neck injury in a single sport—American football. It is thus of limited interest to a neurological audience on this side of the Atlantic, especially as many of the injuries which are received in that sport result from its special rules and circumstances; for instance they may be caused by the violent manipulation of the helmets and face-