Book reviews

only to those working in the field but also to those outside who want to know what is going on in this important growth point of neuroscience.

JOHN MARSHALL

Computed Tomography of Congenital Brain Malformations. By Mohammed Sarwar. (Pp 168; \$50.00.) Dordecht: Martinus Nijhoff. St Louis: Warren H Green, 1984.

As the title indicates this volume confines itself strictly to CT diagnosis. A moderate amount of useful information about encephalocranial embryogenesis is collected in an introductory chapter and more is distributed throughout other sections of the book. The largest chapters are those dealing with dysgenesis of the corpus callosum and holoprosencephaly, with descriptions of the Chiari type 2 malformation and Dandy-Walker syndrome being in similar detail. A chapter on the phacomatoses deals most thoroughly with neurofibromatosis and tuberous sclerosis; but then, apart from a 10 page review of hydrocephalus, all other congenital malformations including arachnoid cysts, porencephaly and others, are dismissed in a few lines or paragraphs contained within a relatively short chapter entitled "Miscellaneous."

The presentation is concise and generally quite pleasing. The CT signs are well arranged, and their descriptions in the detailed sections are as complete as any available in print. A combination of CT images, pathological material and occasional line diagrams explain the various points in the text very adequately. However, certain features detract from the presentation which must be mentioned. The most conspicuous is that with very few exceptions, the CT images used are from very early machines. One can accept a few such images to illustrate a particularly uncommon disease or appearance but in a publication of 1985 one does expect "state of the art" images of conditions such as hydrocephalus, callosal dysgenesis, tuberous sclerosis and others which are not rare in specialised units. Also there are several printing errors, some of which are more than minor: there is a piece of text missing on page 7, and captions to illustrations are occasionally misplaced.

I have indicated my reservations about this book. They have concerned the balance of material presented, the quality of the CT images and unfortunate printing

errors. These however are more than counter balanced by the overall clarity and value of the material presented. The printing errors do not seriously detract from informational content, the CT illustrations certainly show what they are intended to show, and those conditions treated so briefly in the concluding chapter carry a considerable amount of useful information. One therefore can recommend with confidence the book to readers of this Journal and particularly to those whose practice frequently involves assessing CT scans in the paediatric age group.

JM STEVENS

Recent Advances in Epilepsy — 2. Edited by Timothy A Pedley & Brian S Meldrum. (Pp 344; £30.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1984.

This is the second volume of a series intended to provide authoritative reviews covering a wide range of current problems in epilepsy. The topics are different from those covered in volume 1, which was published in 1983, and it is planned that the first three volumes of the series should form a cumulative textbook of epilepsy.

There are two good reviews of basic mechanisms covering the physiology of focal epilepsy and the energy metabolism during seizures, and there are 11 reviews of clinical aspects. The first of these is a long detailed review of PET, SPECT and NMR-CT scanning in epilepsy. Very little space is given over to SPECT and NMR-CT scanning, since very few studies have been reported so far on epileptic patients. NMR-CT scanning, in particular, is proving of great interest, and will require further review shortly. The next two chapters discuss the difficult questions of when to initiate and when to discontinue anti-convulsant therapy, and offer balanced thoughtful reviews of these debated issues, about which no consensus will occur until more knowledge is available. There is a chapter from California on status epilepticus, which includes an excellent review of its physiological consequences. The discussion of the management of status epilepticus curiously makes no mention of the use of chlormethiazole or clonazepam, drugs which are commonly employed outside the USA. Clonazepam is discussed, however, in an "update" on the benzodiazepines, which also discusses the use of a rectal solution of diazepam in status epilepticus, clobazam in chronic epilepsy and, briefly, the phenomenon of tolerance to these

drugs. A chapter on psychogenic seizures reviews the recent extensive data which has emerged from centres with facilities for long-term EEG monitoring with video. The discussion on the diagnostic use of the EEG, however, makes no mention of the occasional occurrence of complex partial seizures with no change in the scalp recorded EEG. There is a thorough and well written review of the surgical treatment of epilepsy from Augusta, Georgia, USA. The other chapters cover the cognitive effects of antiepileptic drugs, therapeutic monitoring of antiepileptic drugs, neonatal seizures and reflex epilepsy.

In conclusion, this volume can be strongly recommended to anyone with an interest in epilepsy.

RICHARD ROBERTS

The Therapeutic State: Psychiatry in the Mirror of Current Events. By Thomas Szasz. (Pp 360; \$22.95 H/back; \$10.95 P/back.) New York: Prometheus Books, 1984.

This is a collection of Professor Szasz' essays, most of them published over the last ten years. They can be read at two levels: as some sort of satirical fireworks or as a steady search-light, illuminating the pretensions, contradictions and indeed iniquities and degradation which comprise psychiatric theory and practice. At the first level they are moderately stimulating. Professor Szasz's needle is certainly very sharp but to the point of fragility as he is a solo operator. Bernard Shaw's squibs lit up a band of worthy Fabians. Sydney Smith had many allies. Professor Szasz seems to have only enemies. Some of the funniest essays in the book are Professor Szasz's arguments with the American Civil Liberties Union. This worthy body were attempting to give American citizens more protection against compulsory admission along the lines of our own recent Mental Health Act, but the very fact that they recognised the need for compulsory admission at all was enough for the Professor. To him it was clear the Union was seeking "under the banner of civil liberties, to transform our relatively open society into one that is completely closed, that is into a Therapeutic State".

As a serious critic Professor Szasz does not pass muster. He may be a Professor of Psychiatry but he certainly is not a Professor of Logic. His own excessive use of invective reflects the insecurity of his