Trauma: Conventional Radiological Study in Spine Injury. (*Radiology of the Spine Series.*) By Jean-Claude Dosch. (Pp 95; DM 130.00.) Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1985.

This slim volume inaugurates, we are told in the preface, a new series entitled *Radiology of the Spine*; all the books are to be written by various radiologists of the Strasbourg School. The fact is important to grasp, namely that this book is only the first of more to come, since a textbook dealing with spinal injuries that omits computed tomography and myelographic documentation of the neurological complications is unlikely to attract many buyers nowadays.

The text consists of five chapters, namely: radiographic anatomy applied to spinal injuries; neck injuries; thoracic and lumbar spinal injuries; a chapter headed *Comprehensive Study* which deals with diagnosis in depth (description of the lesion related to pre-existing pathology, vector forces and complication) and finally, a classification of spinal injuries. The author states that each lesion is caused by one of four forces: distraction, compression, rotation, or a shearing movement. A list is appended consisting of about 100 references to the relevant French and English-language literature, but only a few are referred to in the text.

The most attractive feature is the lavish use of high-quality radiographic illustrations: 70 cases, each shown by conventional radiographs, tomograms and/or line drawings; not a single one of them is standard. Considered as a whole, the 154 figures are an invaluable record of the various types of spinal injury.

Unfortunately the text falls short of this ideal. Although grammatically the translation cannot be seriously faulted, there are phrases and paragraphs far removed from English medical usage. A sentence in the preface tells the reader what to expect from the author: "(He) reviews the whole roentgenographic semantics in spinal traumatology." By reading such obscure passages several times, the reader usually grasps the drift; I found myself making mental notes, eg. for "neurotoxicity" read "neurological involvement", for "radio-semiology" read "radiological appearances"; etc. Sometimes the fog is impenetrable: for example, page 70 "a tear-drop fracture is prominently neuroaggressive"—whatever that means. A post-title page dedication reads "L'image est souveraine le langage est servile", and this sentence neatly sums up the book.

EH BURROWS

Prolactinomas. An interdisciplinary approach. Edited by LM Auer, G Leb, G Tscherne, W Urdl, and GF Walter. (Pp 439; DM 148.00.) Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1985.

This book follows the increasingly common practice of publishing the proceedings of a meeting, which in this case was held in Austria in 1984. Collections of papers which were originally presented from a platform often translate poorly into book form but contributors to this column have evidently taken great care in the preparation of their chapters. The result cannot be described as a textbook, but it has the advantages of being eminently readable and very up-to-date.

Morphology of prolactinomas is considered first and begins with an excellent review of the structural and ultra-structural effects of bromocriptine on prolactinomas by Professor Landholt. Several contributions on the immunocytochemistry of pituitary tumours using the recently described technique of dual labelling with immunoperoxidase and protein bound gold particles, make it clear that the idea of one pituitary hormone per cell is no longer tenable. It is not only possible to demonstrate for example, that growth hormone and prolactin co-exist in the same tumour cell but that these hormones are also present in the same secretory granules. Attention is also drawn to the limitations of immunocytochemistry which remains a qualitative technique and the fact that the immunocytochemical results cannot always be correlated with plasma hormone levels and the endocrinological status of the patient. The short section on radiology, with only two contributions, contains no surprises but emphasises the fact that not all microadenomas of the pituitary can be detected using computed tomography of the highest resolution.

The third section, which concerns endocrinological and clinical aspects of prolactinomas, is particularly valuable. Repetition of the well-known effects of dopamine and dopamine agonists on prolactin secretion in various clinical situations is avoided and instead the contributors concentrate largely on more fundamental questions. These questions include the mechanism by which dopamine inhibits prolactin synthesis as opposed to simply suppressing its secretion, drawing attention to the fact that these two effects may be mediated by different dopamine receptors. Several other studies address the question of whether prolactinomas arise as a result of a

hypothalamic disorder of dopamine production or whether they occur spontaneously and *de novo* at the level of the pituitary. Surprisingly perhaps, it is currently difficult to find any evidence of an underlying hypothalamic disorder which many have assumed to be the underlying cause for prolactinomas.

The sections on surgical and medical treatment of prolactinomas are predictable in so far as the authors often seem to be discussing the treatment of different diseases. The better chapters, however, acknowledge the role of medical and surgical treatment and the fact that these treatments in many patients must be combined in order to produce the best result. It will be of particular interest that increasing experience of microprolactinomas treated surgically tends to show in all series that the recurrence rate increases with longer follow-up. This fact taken together with follow-up studies of patients with untreated microadenomas showing that small tumours only rarely grow significantly over a 5 year period, has now lead to a consensus of opinion that microprolactinomas should normally be treated medically.

The final section in the book deals with gynaecological and obstetric aspects of prolactinomas and emphasises the current view that microprolactinomas only very rarely cause significant complications due to sudden enlargement of the tumour during pregnancy.

It will be apparent to the reader of the review that each chapter in this book represents the personal views and experience of the author and for this reason it cannot be recommended as a reference book. Although excellent of its type it is perhaps only of interest to those in the field who were not able to attend the meeting.

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