
The first edition of this book was well received. The second has doubled in size. What has been gained or lost? It is a compilation by 47 contributors who provide a comprehensive range of expertise and viewpoint looking at the psychology and psychiatry of childhood and adolescence. The danger with such an endeavour is that the cost becomes prohibitive, cohesion is reduced, and there is lack of uniformity of style. I was pleasantly surprised to find that, probably through consummate editorial skill, such pitfalls have been avoided. Chapter by chapter it is scholarly, well referenced and readable, and deals with the most complex issues with lucid simplicity.

The book provides a critical review of the current state of knowledge of every major theme in this rapidly expanding field. Its strength reside in the fact that not only does it debate the relevant theoretical issues, but that it is also essentially pragmatic in focus and tends to adhere to the principle of humanising technical detail wherever possible.

Readers will be suitably informed about influences of development and developmental theories; clinical assessment and clinical syndromes; approaches to treatment, and always about theoretical and research issues. In all of these the viewpoint is free from prejudice. There is no doubt that it is a carefully balanced text book.

The litmus test of such a volume is whether it becomes merely an advanced library reference book or a modern comprehensive textbook widely valued by postgraduates in this field. I applied the litmus test and discovered that a high proportion of postgraduates with whom I am in touch already own their own copy. One must conclude that despite its almost encyclopaedic proportions, its other qualities make it an invaluable textbook for practitioners and trainees belonging to the many disciplines working in the child field irrespective of their theoretical or psychotherapeutic standpoint.

It is predictable that like the first, this second edition will become the standard textbook in the subject for the next decade.

ISRAEL KOLVIN


This book comprises essentially a compendium of nearly 300 electron photomicrographs approximately two-thirds of which are devoted to neoplasia and related conditions and is arranged in sections covering the principal intrinsic tumours of the central nervous system, pineal germinoma, malignant epithelial and mesenchymal tumours, choroid, lymphomas and allied conditions, nerve sheath tumours, fibromatoses, meningioma, vascular tumours, pituitary adenoma and craniopharyngioma. The remainder of the atlas is devoted to inborn errors of metabolism, Alzheimer's disease, Pick's disease, progressive supranuclear palsy, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, assorted viral and other infections, and tissue reaction to injury. For each condition a brief introductory note on the histopathology, ultrastructure and distinguishing features precedes the illustrative photomicrographs and each photomicrograph is accompanied by an explanatory note. The book opens with a brief preface outlining the use of electron microscopy in diagnostic cerebral histopathology and a short bibliography accompanies the introductory notes in most chapters.

Despite the large number of illustrations this atlas is not particularly informative. The quality of a substantial proportion of the photomicrographs is indifferent; the majority possessing a prominent grey background tone and in many cases, the contrast is inadequate to reveal fine detail satisfactorily. Moreover, in many instances, the preservation of the tissue was too poor for a satisfactory demonstration of much ultrastructural detail. In only nine illustrations are arrows or other symbols used to bring features to the reader's attention, and there is a similar paucity of insets to illustrate small but important details at high magnification.

The text is likewise not entirely satisfactory. In a number of places, the descriptions are somewhat confused and occasionally misleading, and the style is generally rather tedious. In some respects, it would appear the reader is expected to possess a considerable body of specialist knowledge, while in certain passages, the author has used expressions suitable for a reader completely unfamiliar with electron microscopy.

The overall impression of this book is that not much critical thought has gone into its preparation, and, despite its size, it does not compare very favourably with other atlases of ultrastructural pathology nor does it usefully add to what can be gleaned in the standard neuropathology textbooks. The curious feature is the absence of the author's professional position and address.

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