inferior olivary nucleus would seem to play a crucial part in the pathophysiology of palatal myoclonus. It receives afferent fibres from a wide range of structures, including the cerebral cortex,4 caudate nucleus, red nucleus, cerebellum and spinal cord. The gracile and cuneate nuclei project into the anterior cerebellum directly and indirectly via the basilar pons and inferior olive.5

As Corbin and Williams1 have suggested, afferent impulses triggered by neck posture could, by projections to the inferior olive, influence the reverberating circuit which underlies palatal myoclonus. If this is the case, the projections seem influential in only a small proportion of patients with palatal myoclonus, and a particular head posture is not relevant in this respect. Conceivably, subtle changes in palatal myoclonus triggered by head posture are more detectable by electrophysiological techniques.

References
4 Berkley KJ, Warden IG. Projections to inferior olive of cat: 1. comparisons of input from the dorsal column nuclei, the lateral cerebellar nuclei, the spino-olivary pathways, the cerebrum, and the cerebellum. J Comp Neurol 1978;180:237-51.

Book reviews


Here is another conference symposium in the grand style. But it is one with a difference—thanks to the shrewd foresight of its well known editors we are spared the exhaustive exegesis of unintelligible technology which exudes like some opague exsurrence from so many modern conferences. We are not subjected to a morass of badly written, hastily compiled conclusions padding out the very latest numerical and graphic data in ill-digested form. Each of the contributors has presented an overview of current developments, illustrated by a sample of his recent investigations.

Over 500 participants from 28 countries took part, we are told, but mercifully not all were required to share the fruits of their ephemeral knowledge with readers of this volume. There are four major themes: epidemiological and aetiological factors; biochemical and ultrastructural pathology; motor and non-motor aspects of Parkinson’s disease; and, current and future approaches to therapy.

The result is a truly up to date, lucid review of the subject, heavily laden with modern techniques and seminal data which will appeal not only to research workers, but to the jobbing clinical neurologist who seeks further understanding of this intriguing and still bewildering complex of motor and neuropsychological disorder. It is well presented with good illustrations and tabular material. The authors provide valuable information over almost the entire field so that it is invidious to pick out some of the many topics which are important, yet which so frequently escape attention in less comprehensive anthologies. The editors are to be congratulated on managing to distil such a useful compendium which (price apart) deserves a wide readership.

JMS PEARCE


These are the final two volumes in a series of five which extensively cover the anatomical, physiological, biochemical, pharmacological and clinical aspects of spinal cord function and dysfunction. It is a multi-author series and as such the quality of the chapters shows some variability. Volumes 4 and 5 cover congenital and traumatic disorders in part I and infections and cancer in part II. In total there are twenty chapters with seven hundred and seventy nine pages including an extensive author and subject index.

The first chapter sets the clinical tone of the book and illustrates with many references the basic spinal cord syndromes as they present in practice. The following four chapters are concerned with spinal cord trauma including the pathophysiological mechanisms occurring during injury, and spinal cord regeneration. The chapter on spinal cord trauma and its early clinical management is very good. It has, perhaps, a slight bias towards operative intervention, but nevertheless places this in its true context and is not blind to the substantial evidence in the literature which indicates that early intervention rarely improves neurophysiological function with the exception of a few uncommon clinical situations. It includes the use of computed tomography and MRI which is not yet freely available to Spinal Injury Centres in the UK. Whether this high technology in radiological investigation will make any difference to the ultimate outcome, remains to be seen. The chapter on neurophysiology of spinal spasticity was written at the theoretical and investigational level. I was disappointed that there was no clinical section dealing with the problems of management of painful spinal spasticity following traumatic paraplegia.

There is an adequate but not over-inspiring chapter on cerebral spondylosis and stenosis which covered most aspects of this common condition. However, major omissions concerned the natural history and progression of the disease process and there was little or no mention of MRI in cervical degenerative disease. I found this slightly surprising considering the author works in a major unit in San Francisco. Nevertheless the illustrations were of high quality and the chapter was extremely well referenced.

For the remainder of part I my interest waned slightly when confronted with an overview of inherited disorders of the spinal cord, neural tube defects and autonomic nervous system diseases of the spinal cord. Nevertheless these provide a valuable source
of reference should further information be required on these conditions. The chapter on vascular disorders of the spinal cord was well written, up to date and covered all vascular disorders from infarction to extramedullary haematomas and arteriovenous malformations. The only slight criticism of this otherwise highly readable chapter was that the author did not quite make clear the distinction between “pure” intramedullary arteriovenous malformations and dural arteriovenous fistulae.

Part II commences with an excellent chapter by Leonard Malis on spinal cord tumours. This was obviously based on the author’s huge wealth of clinical experience and I would recommend this chapter for anyone concerned with the management of spinal cord tumours. The illustrations are plentiful and of high quality throughout the chapter. There are little pearls of advice on diagnosis and surgical treatment, for instance on the removal of intramedullary haemangioblastomas without getting into the uncontrollable haemorrhage that can occur. Dr Malis mentions the subject of anterior decompression of metastatic tumours of the vertebral column, a subject which is perhaps gaining more attention than it has done in the past. Following on from this is a short chapter on the pathology of different types of spinal tumour which makes up for its brevity with a list of 247 references. The many aspects of systemic cancer involving the spinal cord are discussed including myelopathy secondary to chemotherapy, radiation myelopathy, and non-metastatic effects on the spinal cord. Unfortunately this chapter still recommends pantopaque myelography and there is virtually no mention of MRI as a vastly superior method of diagnosing this problem.

Slightly out of place in this section on spinal cord tumours is a very good chapter on infections of the spinal cord. With the exception of epidural abscesses these infections are regarded more as an orthopaedic condition in some neurosurgical centres in the United Kingdom, making this chapter very useful for neurosurgical trainees in this position. Once again, however, there is little mention of MRI.

In the second half of part II chapters are included on syphilis of the spinal cord, tetanus, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, the stiff man syndrome, toxic metabolic and deficiency diseases and demyelinating diseases affecting the spinal cord. The merits of including these under the heading of infections and cancer is certainly open to question and I regarded these final six chapters as a comforting source of reference should I require any further information on these conditions. However, for neurosurgeons particularly interested in spinal conditions, they should at least be aware of the neurological alternative to surgical diagnoses and the chapters on amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and demyelinating diseases certainly help.

In general I found this a very good source of information on diseases of the spinal cord to be found either in the text or the comprehensive list of references at the end of each chapter. In the preface the editor indicates it is designed to appeal to those involved in laboratory work, clinical work, and in the classroom. My feeling is that he has achieved this purpose. Its price almost precludes it being bought by anyone but the medical libraries, or those with a strong interest in diseases of the spinal cord and who are looking for a modern source of information on these. R.A. Johnston


In this book the author describes an approach to the rehabilitation of memory in patients with acquired brain injury, and reports a series of studies carried out at the Rivermead Rehabilitation Centre in Oxford on which her PhD thesis was based.

In the first four chapters, the rationale of the book is given together with brief reviews of relevant areas in neuropsychology, cognitive psychology and behavioural psychology. A practical, problem-solving approach to the rehabilitation of memory problems emerges which takes into account theoretical principles from these three areas of psychology. A number of studies carried out by the author and her colleagues are then described in the next seven chapters. A description of the development of the Rivermead Behavioural Memory Test is given together with its rationale and results of a pilot study. This battery is designed to provide a much needed tool for measuring memory performance in everyday living and is in its early stages of development; its usefulness and range of application remains to be determined especially for less severely damaged patients whose everyday problems are often more subtle. Chapters six to eight have been published previously as journal articles and a book chapter. They comprise a series of single case studies, on the usefulness of visual imagery in improving name learning, on success and failure in the rehabilitation of memory in a CVA patient and on relearning letters of the alphabet in a case of acquired dyslexia. Three chapters then report on investigations into the PQRST strategy for increasing the recall of prose, a group study on the use of visual imagery to improve learning of word lists and an interesting study which compares the effectiveness of four mnemonic strategies in groups of brain damaged and non-brain damaged subjects. A final chapter summarises the importance of utilising theory and methodology from different areas of psychology in an approach to rehabilitation and considers future directions and the cost-benefit ratio of this type of intervention. An overview discussing implications of the reported research for theories of memory might have been useful.

The book is written clearly and in a style which should allow a wide readership. A reasonable proportion of the author’s research has been published elsewhere, however, it is useful now to have this work readily accessible in a single volume. All who have an interest in the rehabilitation of patients with acquired brain damage should find this book to be of use, and it can be highly recommended. T.M. McMillan


This book results from an international symposium held in London in April 1986 organised by the CIBA Foundation. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss mechanisms of neuronal death during normal development and in disease states. There were 26 participants engaged in neuroscience research in the fields of biology, chemistry, physiology and pathology. The book contains 14 assorted chapters of established fact, recent experimental observation and speculation. Of great interest is the publication of the free discussion periods that followed each presentation. These include additional stimulating ideas and are particularly enjoyable to read. The first two chapters summarise some of the many human and animal neurodegenerative diseases showing distinct patterns of selective neuronal death, the mechanisms of which