

more on histology, histochemistry, and the relationship of pineal to other hormones, than on how the light message affects the ovary and testis. The book starts with nine chapters about the development of pinealocytes and photoreceptors, followed by six chapters on the development of melatonin rhythms and their menstrual relationship. Next comes reproduction, and finally old age, in which, perhaps surprisingly, the pineal may remain active.

The problem remains to relate all this to clinical medicine, and as yet no link has been clearly established between the pineal gland and either neurological maturation in children or affective disorders in adults, although some of the authors would have us believe this. The investigation of magnetic field variation on the human pineal has parallels with the earlier Salpêtrière experiments in hypnotism. However, the relationship between pineal tumours and precocious puberty in children is discussed well.

The book is not typeset and has no index, surely essential for even the most evanescent record of a conference proceedings to be of real value. However there are many well-produced illustrations, and long reference lists. The book is not in the same class as the recent Ciba Foundation Symposium *Photoperiodism, melatonin and the pineal*. For pinealologists only.

DAVID PARKES

A Clinician's View of Neuromuscular Diseases, 2nd ed. By Michael H Brooke. (Pp 388; £38.00.) London: Williams & Wilkins, 1986.

This is the second edition of this popular account of muscle diseases. In the preface to the first edition the author said "My own prejudices ... are here displayed for all to see" and he might have added that that is the major advantage of any personal book if the prejudices shed light and its downfall if they cause tedium. In this case I greatly enjoyed reading it from cover to cover. Apart from anything else it was a pleasure to read in some detail about how an acknowledged expert actually manages patients even when the disease is untreatable.

The book starts with a discussion of symptoms and signs and contains a particularly useful section on what the observation of simple functional acts (rising from the floor, walking etc) actually indicates about the strength of various muscle groups. A sur-

prising omission is mention of paradoxical abdominal movements as evidence of diaphragm weakness supported by measurement of supine and erect vital capacity. The importance of recording and grading functional abilities is well emphasised.

There follow chapters on diseases of motor neurons (neuropathies are not included in this book), diseases of the neuromuscular junction and then the main muscle diseases categorised as dystrophies, myotonia, inflammatory myopathy, metabolic disease, abnormal muscle activity and congenital (more or less) muscle diseases (sic). In each chapter there is an up to date and remarkably comprehensive account of the present state of knowledge in each disease which is well referenced up to 1985. Sometimes these accounts lacked complete clarity (notably on myasthenia gravis) but most were excellent. The clinical descriptions are enhanced by the clinical photographs and the muscle biopsy findings are well illustrated but not exhaustively (or exhaustingly). The chapter on dystrophies has a particularly good section on management but stops somewhat abruptly without any discussion of the issue of ventilatory support. There is a clear and sufficiently detailed section on exercise and muscle metabolism to allow some sense to be made of the bewildering number of enzyme defects in energy metabolism now described. Acquired muscle disease is somewhat sketchily covered doubtless reflecting the difference between a true "muscle specialist" and a "general neurologist with an interest"; hence there is no discussion on the differential diagnosis of all those weak patients with general medical disorders who seem to be rather commoner than a new case of dystrophy in the UK (no mention of steroid myopathy, osteomalacic myopathy or carcinomatous neuromyopathy and half a page on alcohol).

This book is well presented and easy to read even if the number of spelling mistakes is almost at irritation threshold. Nevertheless it can be highly recommended as a book to have personally, rather than in a distant library, if one is dealing with clinical muscle problems.

CM WILES

Stereotactic Techniques in Clinical Neurosurgery. By Andries Bosch. (Pp 278; DM 125.00.) Vienna: Springer-Verlag, 1986.

This small volume distils the recent advances, which have come in the last five

years, in stereotactic technique in a manageable space, so that not only traditional neurosurgeons who may not have been trained in stereotaxis, but also medical neurologists, may understand the benefit which may flow now from the use of such methods. There are 14 chapters, which address all the relevant current aspects of stereotaxis, as well as providing a historical perspective. The most commonly used commercially available stereotactic apparatus is described. The practice of classical stereotaxis, based largely on ventriculography, as well as the modern methods based on CT scanning is lucidly described. Effectively this book may be used as a text book by the trainee neurosurgeon requiring skill in stereotaxis. The author reviews the literature concerning the indications and results of stereotaxis for functional purposes, for example movement disorders and the treatment of pain, as well as the indications in tumour surgery. He also presents his personal view and experience in these fields. The text is sometimes idiosyncratic in its use of English and didactic in its instruction. However, it has condensed an enormous amount of information into a small and easily readable volume. As a text book it must be compared with much larger volumes which often cover the field and present information in a more turgid way. The book is printed on excellent paper with good illustrations and an excellent bibliography. It should be on the library shelf of every department of neurosurgery and of that minority of neurosurgeons who chose to take an interest in stereotaxis. It should also be read by other neurosurgeons and by medical neurologists. It can be recommended as an up-to-date and authoritative account of the state of the art.

DGT THOMAS

Notice

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Further information, may be obtained from The Secretariat, P.O.B. 50006, Tel-Aviv 61500, Israel