Eight chapters of the book are devoted to a consideration of the electrophysiological abnormalities in neuromuscular disease and can be particularly recommended for their clarity.

I have only a few reservations on this volume. The reader new to electrophysiology will have difficulty finding a clear statement as to the significance of demyelination in conduction velocity studies. The comments on the pathophysiology of myasthenia gravis are certainly out of date and the generalisation that acquired and hereditary myopathies share a similar EMG will find few adherents among clinical electrophysiologists.

These are, however, minor criticisms of what is undoubtedly a very informative text. It is not a lab manual but complimentary to such. It is an erudite introduction to the rationale and techniques of modern EMG and can be recommended to newcomers to the discipline and those who in requesting EMG examinations might wish to better understand the nature of the discipline, its capabilities and limitations.

JP BALLANTYNE

Infections of the Nervous System. Edited by Peter GE Kennedy and Richard T Johnson (Pp 284; £35.00.) Guildford: Butterworth Scientific, 1987.

Many of the senior neurologists in the United Kingdom clearly will remember *Modern Trends in Neurology* a Butterworth publication edited by Denis Williams which was, in its time, the only publication to describe what were the recent advances in the subject. Now, of course, there are many such publications not least of which is this, the successor to *Modern Trends*, *Butterworth's International Medical Reviews*, numbering 1-7.

This particular volume edited by Peter Kennedy and Richard Johnson is devoted to infections of the nervous system and it has been a pleasure to read it and review it, for it matches the standard set by its seven predecessors. The volume comprises 13 chapters in all, the 13th somewhat significantly devoted to the neurological problems of AIDS: infections in AIDS and other immunosuppressed patients. This is an excellent chapter and certainly more than adequately covers our current understanding of the neurological problems suffered by those who are HIV positive.

The editors hoped to highlight areas of the subjects where significant advances have been made and which have relevance to the treatment of patients. I feel in their choice of authors and the material selected by those authors, they have succeeded. There is an up to date account of acute bacterial meningitis which is comprehensive except that it fails to address itself to the problem of the partially suppressed and partially treated meningitis which even now is raising medical legal issues. Tuberculosis of the nervous system is very competently dealt with by Roman Kocen who addresses the question of treatment very clearly and argues the case against the use of steroids very cogently. The chapter on the spirochaetal infections of the nervous system includes a full consideration of the borrelioses, the relapsing fevers and Lyme disease. The chapter on botulism and tetanus written by John Griffin from the editor's University of Johns Hopkins, contains an up to date discussion of the pathogenesis of tetanus. Fungal diseases of the nervous system are reviewed and there is an excellent chapter on cerebral malaria arguing against the significance of cerebral oedema in producing the bad prognosis of falciparum infections.

In the chapter on acute viral meningitis and encephalitis the problem of herpes infection is given due emphasis and there is a very useful section on the dilemma of brain biopsy, the author favouring biopsy in any patient with an unknown encephalitis that may be due to herpes if the patient is seen early, if the signs and symptoms are severe and show clinical progression, and significantly, if the medical centre has the appropriate surgical facilities and a competent diagnostic viral laboratory. Unfortunately not all centres are so privileged and I feel today, most patients with suspected herpes encephalitis, will be treated with the anti-viral compound acyclovir, without biopsy. The author argues against the use of steroids in the acute phase of the disease but I feel his arguments are largely theoretical.

Peter Kennedy, the joint editor, considers the neurological complications of varicellazoster virus and whilst his chapter is comprehensive, I feel his discussion of management should require revision. His consideration of the treatment of post-herpetic neuralgia is somewhat naive. We are told that the patient can be given cold packs to apply locally, we are told that surgical procedures may have to be considered in exceptionally severe cases but we are not told what surgical procedures are available and later the author advises us that they are

"best avoided in most patients since they make the pain worse". This is scarcely good advice to a clinician looking for help with the management of a severely afflicted patient. He goes on to say that severe cases frequently do not respond to treatment at all and himself favours a mixture of carbamazepine and an anti-depressant. He does not mention the possibility of use of a vibrator or cooling spray and leaves us in considerable doubt as to what we should recommend for our patients.

The subject of postinfectious encephalomyelitis is dealt with by Richard Johnson with the authority and broad understanding of the subject which one has come to associate with his writing. The slow virus infections are considered by Brian Matthews with an emphasis on their epidemiology which of course has been a particular interest of his.

JB FOSTER

Notices

International Child Neurology Association. The 5th Congress will be held in Chiba, Japan, 4-10 November 1990. Information may be obtained from the Secretariat, c/o Simul International Inc., Kowa Building No 9, 8-10, Akasaka 1-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107, Japan.

The Fulton Society. The Fourteenth International Symposium (on the Neurobiology of Brain Implants) will be held in New Delhi, October 1989. Information may be obtained from Prof Dr Victor Soriano, Calle Buenos Aires 363, Montevideo, Uruguay.