

Matters arising

References

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Carey et al reply:

We are grateful to Bindoff *et al* for their interest and critique of our case report.

Some misunderstanding has occurred over table 1. The quoted reference interval is

a mean + or - 2SD, based on a population of 100 muscle biopsy samples investigated.

Palmitate oxidation rates to CO₂, in our experience, have only fallen below the quoted interval in this patient, and a number of patients in whom a diagnosis of mitochondrial myopathy has been made by means of histological and electron-microscopical investigation of muscle tissue.

Furthermore poor conversion of carbohydrate fuels and ketones to CO₂ have always been observed in this latter group of patients, suggesting a reduction in total mitochondrial metabolism. This is not the situation in our patient presented in the case report under discussion, where only a decrease in palmitate metabolism was seen.

Book reviews

Postoperative Complications of Extracranial Neurological Surgery. Edited by Norman H Horwitz and Hugo V Rizzoli. (Pp 387; £67.00.) London: Williams & Wilkins, 1987.

This text is a companion to *Postoperative Complications of Intracranial Neurological Surgery* published in 1982; it is a multi author, North American text and has been well edited to maintain a degree of uniformity. The topics range from laminectomy to ECIC bypass; all chapters are very well referenced. The chapter on laminectomy and on herniated intervertebral discs and spinal stenosis are excellent and offer very good advice to those less experienced in these procedures, the chapter on pain by Nashold is an excellent review of pain relief procedures and complications, as is the chapter on carotid endarterectomy which understandably, puts forward the American view on this but in which there is a sufficiency of detail and references to formulate one's own opinion. There is also very good advice in the chapter on entrapment neuropathies concerning the "minor" procedure of carpal tunnel decompression and the last chapter on neuroradiology is particularly useful in view of the increasing range and complexity of these investigations.

Overall the book is well organised, well referenced with both an author and subject index and although the price may seem a little high for such a slim volume it is a mine of useful information. I highly recommend it as essential reading for those who perform any extracranial neurological surgery.

T RUSSELL

AIDS and the Nervous System. Edited by Mark L Rosenblum, Robert M Levy, Dale E Bredesen. (Pp 402; \$78.00.) New York: Raven Press, 1987.

An authoritative monograph to cover what is known on AIDS and the nervous system was lacking and is desirable for several reasons. Involvement of the nervous system in the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome occurs in about 30% of the cases in published clinical series and in 70%-80% of cases in pathological series. In Britain, the clinical incidence of neurological syndromes throughout the illness is in the region of 50%. The AIDS epidemic is becoming a serious public health problem in many countries. The neurological community is likely to become more and more involved in the management of these patients as the magnitude and complexity of the nervous system involvement becomes more apparent. Further, AIDS related research may shed light on other neurological diseases. The recent work on HTLV-I and tropical spastic paraparesis is an example.

This book goes a long way to fill the need mentioned above. It is intended for all those involved in treating patients with neurological diseases related to HIV infection. Most of the authors work at centres where large numbers of patients with AIDS have been seen and their contributions contain their personal experience as well as thorough reviews of the literature, usually to the end of 1986.

After two introductory chapters, on an overview of AIDS and the nervous system and on neuroepidemiology, the book is divided into five sections; Clinical Neurological Syndromes and Diagnosis, Diseases Affecting the Nervous System:

Prognosis and Therapy, Patient Care Issues and a Conclusion with treatment algorithms.

The clinical sections discuss comprehensively central, and less so peripheral neurological syndromes including those directly related to HIV infection, opportunistic infections and neoplasms. Sometimes the descriptions are unduly weighed in favour of basic aspects to the detriment of the clinical side. This is particularly noticeable in the chapter on viral infections. Neurophthalmological and neuroradiological aspects, neurology in children and neuropathology are all considered in separate chapters. Elsewhere there is a useful chapter on Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control Precautions and a stimulating one on the Biology of the human immunodeficiency virus and its role in neurological disease.

The standards of writing, editing, printing and illustration are generally high, but a few errors are inevitably present. Few would agree with the statement that "mass effect suggests progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy rather than viral encephalitis" (page 146). Here and there references are quoted wrongly.

These criticisms are, however, minor. This book documents well the first 5-6 years of work related to neurological involvement in AIDS. In the fullness of time it will be a document of what was known and hypothesised in the mid 80s about neurological involvement in AIDS. Currently, it is an excellent source of facts and references and should find a place in every medical library. Most clinicians treating AIDS patients and neuroscientists working in AIDS would probably wish to have their own copy.

R J GUILLOFF