Book reviews

Advanced Technology in Neurosurgery. Edited by F Pluchino, G Broggi. (Pp 265; DM 176.) Berlin: Springer, 1987.

Amidst the recent spate of trans-Atlantic books on the laser in neurosurgery it is refreshing to read this European publication which puts the laser in the context of other new neurosurgical techniques. Nevertheless, in an almost international gathering of authors there are major contributions from the USA in Stein's accounts of the CUSA and the treatment of cerebral and spinal AVMs using pre-operative embolisation and non-laser microsurgery, Epstein's presentation of the excision of spinal intramedullary tumours of childhood, using both the laser and ultrasound aspirator, Kelly's computer-monitored CO2 laser stereotactic glioma excision, and the account by Laws and co-authors of the photodynamic therapy of brain tumours, all of which are quite comprehensive and valuable.

In addition there are extensive chapters on intraoperative monitoring with evoked potentials, and a number of sections concerned with stereotactic and interstitial radiotherapeutic techniques, embolisation of AVMs, and advanced stereotactic methods. The inclusion of chapters on neuro-stimulation devices, and long term drug delivery systems make this a comprehensive volume of value to all neurosurgeons who wish to be acquainted with modern techniques.

G BROCKLEHURST

Neuro-Ophthalmology: a Problem Oriented Approach. By RW Beck, CH Smith. (Pp 264; £27.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1988.

Neuro-ophthalmology is a complicated discipline, involving aspects of a number of specialties, principally ophthalmology and neurology. It is difficult for residents in training in these specialties to grasp the subject, which can appear very fragmented and concerned only with minutiae. This excellent little book provides an admirable grounding in the subject. The aim has been to provide a broad overview, stressing the importance of the history and examination rather than specialised investigations in arriving at a diagnosis. There are 36 chapters. The first concentrates on the examination, beginning at a fairly basic level, and introducing and explaining the ophthalmological and neurological jargon, which so often bedevils communication between these specialties. There follow 19 chapters on the afferent visual system, 10 on the efferent, two on the eyelids, two on the pupils and one each on migraine and caroticocavernous fistula. Each chapter consists of the presentation of a case in some detail, followed by a summary and a discussion of the differential diagnosis. The clinical diagnosis is then made and discussed. Additional diagnostic testing is discussed and the management of the condition dealt with in some detail. Each chapter is followed by a bibliography of recent relevant references.

This system works very well. The cases are interesting and well illustrated with line drawings of visual field defects, photographs of the fundi and of CT scans. There is straightforward practical information on the best approach to a particular clinical problem, and the writing style is both easy and lucid. In addition to the illustrations of case reports, there are 28 good quality colour photographs of the optic disc in various conditions.

This book can be recommended both to medical students, who will find it interesting and stimulating and also to ophthalmologists, neurologists and neurosurgeons in training. At £27 it is good value and there should be a copy in every medical school, eye department and neurology department library.

J ELSTON

Neurological Infections. By Martin Wood, Milne Anderson. (Pp 666; £60.00.) London: WB Saunders, 1988.

This is Volume 16 in the series on *Major Problems in Neurology* brought out by WB Saunders. A number of the previous volumes have been distinguished and this book carries on the fine tradition. Indeed, my reaction when looking at the book for the first time was one of admiration for the sheer staying power of the two authors who have clearly put a vast amount of effort into writing the 666 pages all by themselves. A number of volumes on infections of the nervous system have been published over the last few years, some of them excellent, but these have usually been multi-authored. One advantage of this dual authorship approach is that the book has a uniformity of style which is not all that common nowadays.

The book is very comprehensive and wide in scope. Just about every neurological infection is discussed to a greater or lesser extent. After an initial general chapter on cerebrospinal fluid abnormalities in CNS infections, the authors chose to cover the manifold infectious conditions under a relatively small number of general topics. These include acute purulent meningitis, acute lymphocytic meningitis, chronic meningitis, including CNS tuberculosis and fungal infections, suppuration and focal disease encompassing brain abscess, parameningeal infections, toxoplasmosis, cysticercosis and other helminthal infections, and this is followed by a chapter on acute encephalitis which is almost 100 pages long and includes the herpes viruses, HIV, measles, cerebral malaria and many others. Separate chapters are then devoted to poliomyelitis and other entroviruses, rabies, syphilis and then parainfectious conditions. There is then a short chapter on slow viruses followed by a section on infections affecting peripheral nerves at the motor end-plate, and finally a chapter on muscle infections.

Clearly with such a wide range of subjects to discuss the authors have found it necessary to impose some kind of classification scheme and no such scheme can be perfect. However, their approach seems to me to be very reasonable although it does have the disadvantage that different aspects of a particular topic are often not covered in any one chapter; for example, to get all the information on varicella zoster virus infections one has to look up several sections of the book under different sub-sections. This, however, is not a real criticism because it is inevitable. There are certainly no major omissions in this book which is really remarkably comprehensive, and the authors have not shied away from tropical or parasitic infections. My only criticisms are not major ones. For example, in general I found that the pathogenesis sections in the various chapters would have benefited from some expansion, as for example, in the sections on herpes viruses and HIV. Likewise, there is relatively little discussion on molecular biological aspects of many of these diseases and this is particularly important since molecular approaches are now proving so useful in the pathogenesis and diagnosis of neurological infections. More importantly, I thought that HIV infections really did deserve a separate chapter rather than being subsumed under the acute encephalitis section. While the discussion of HIV infections was perfectly reasonable I think this could have been expanded especially as regards the difficult issues of the