Book reviews

However, none is quite like this one. Who would have thought of publishing an atlas on multiple sclerosis? What use could it be and to whom?

This book is a product of Colin Adams' thirty years' research in the field of myelin and multiple sclerosis; the illustrations have been collected over this period. The atlas forms a unique record of techniques which are still highly relevant for today's research. Most of the illustrations are in colour and they are, on the whole, well reproduced by the printer. There is a tremendous range of histological, histochemical and immunocytochemical techniques and there are scattered electron micrographs and some CT and MRI scans.

The word “atlas” in the title is slightly misleading. It is rather more than an atlas as there is substantial text in the form of succinct up-to-date summaries in each section which are well referenced and refer to the illustrations. Although blocks of text precede the illustrations and are separate from them, there is enough information in the captions of each illustration to allow the reader to browse through the pictures and to gain much valuable information. I recognise many of the photographs that I have seen the author project on a number of occasions and they really are good illustrations of a wide range of histochemical techniques. They show the standards that can be reached with some of the more difficult histochemical methods.

The book is divided into 10 chapters. In the first four the text and illustrations cover the general principles of myelin structure and demyelinating diseases both in man and in animals. There is also a chapter on experimental and laboratory studies of myelin diseases. The last six chapters deal with the epidemiology, pathology, histology and cytology, vascular aspects, immunology and complications of multiple sclerosis in a logical manner.

Although the account of multiple sclerosis in this book is very much an individual view, it does cover a wide variety of ideas and techniques and, as such, forms an excellent record of methods by which multiple sclerosis can be investigated pathologically. The text greatly adds to the atlas so that the book will be of interest to neurologists, pathologists and neuroscientists interested in the pathological and research aspects of multiple sclerosis.

This is the second edition of an influential and useful introductory book on linguistic approaches to aphasia. The book is concerned with the contributions of linguistics to our knowledge of aphasic disorders and the central chapters are reproduced with little change from the earlier edition. The author starts with an introduction to the medical and clinical background to aphasia and by giving an account of the areas of linguistic theory relevant to aphasic disorders. Retained in its previous form is a review of the application in aphasiology of De Sausser's contrast between selection and combination and Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance. The cognitive impairments observed in aphasic patients other than aphasic difficulties are then briefly reviewed. Disorders of primary functions and disorders secondary to language dysfunction are covered, as are impairments associated with lesions outside the language area. However, the amount of space allocated to these areas is inadequate to provide a sufficiently detailed review.

In the next two chapters the role of semantic relationships is explored and the significance of these to the difficulties experienced by aphasic patients. Unfortunately much of the work published more recently on category specific deficits is either not included in the text or is, or is added in a summary at the end of the chapter. Similarly, the two subsequent chapters on investigations of syntax and phonology have not been brought up to date. In addition, many of the references published several years ago are quoted in the text as still “in press”.

More recent studies in neuropsychology and psycholinguistics are collected in a final chapter entitled “Psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic applications of linguistics to aphasia”. Areas covered here include further developments of what I presume to be Morton's logogen model of lexical processing, PET (Positron Emission Tomography), studies of regional blood flow during lexical processing and recent work on sentence processing. The final section is concerned with clinical measures and applications and should be of use to the practising clinician.

The contribution of the second edition of this book is to include new techniques and findings as well as recent theoretical developments relevant to aphasia. Overall, the book provides a comprehensive review of linguistic approaches to aphasia. I would particularly recommend the two chapters on syntax and phonology. Here the author gives a stimulating and readable account of the grammatical and phonological difficulties in aphasia, the latter being considered both in terms of neuromuscular incoordination and as a central linguistic dysfunction. The book as a whole provides a good starting point for students and professionals interested in language pathology. Some prior knowledge of linguistics or aphasia would probably be an advantage in that the information is fairly condensed, but this serves to enhance its value as a reference book. Neuropsychologists and neurologists should find the bibliography useful. It would have been even more valuable had the information and references in the text been brought more up to date.

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References


In 1971 after a meticulous study of the clinical records and neuropathological findings in alcoholics, Maurice Victor and Raymond Adams produced a monograph on Wernicke's disease and Korsakoff psychosis. They described their experience of 20 years' work at the Boston City Hospital and later at the Massachusetts General and Cleveland Metropolitan General Hospitals. Now some 18 years later they review their original experience and include further more recent cases where alcohol has not been implicated as a pathogenetic factor in the development of the neuropathological changes.

The reviewer's impression is that this remains, and will remain, the definitive work on the effects of alcohol and malnutrition on the human nervous system.

The original descriptions by Wernicke and Korsakoff are reviewed and a very detailed account of the clinical phenomena is presented based on the original study of 245 patients and autopsy examinations of 82 of these. Since the first edition of the book the authors have reviewed a similar number of cases. The account of the clinical symptomatology is meticulous and detailed. The majority of the patients studied were alcoholics with alcohol related neurological


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