Book reviews

pituitary stalk in CT diagnosis of empty sella.

A section on interventional neuro-radiology is really too short and sketchy to be useful, and the brief account of spinal angiography contains an unhelpful classification of angiomas which omits the common dural AV fistula.

Also, there are a few rather careless errors: for example, hypoplasia of the basisphenoid, with shortening of the clivus and small condyles, is described under the heading "Basisphenoid Hyperplasia"; and under the Davidoff Dyke syndrome there is a sentence discussing thinning of the calvarium by a cystic mass which presumably relates to an immediately previous paragraph dealing with porencephaly.

The text is extensively illustrated, mainly with very adequate images, but some of the radiographs have not reproduced well and occasionally the relevant features can hardly be detected: for example, calcification in tuberous sclerosis (Fig 2.26) and the arcuate foramen (Fig 9.3). There are occasional inaccuracies in captions, such as the tentorial artery being described as the posterior communicating artery (Fig 5.25).

The concept and lay-out of the book are fine, but it really needs some revision before it could be recommended unreservedly as a good introduction to neuroimaging.

BRIAN KENDALL

Missing the Meaning? A Cognitive Neuropsychological Study of Processing of Words by an Aphasic Patient. By DAVID HOWARD and SUE FRANKLIN (Pp 171; Price: £22.50.) London: MIT Press 1989.

This book brings into focus the controversy of single-case studies. The case described is that of MK, a stroke patient whose language deficits include difficulties in naming, repeating words, reading and comprehension. The literature related to these symptoms is usefully summarised. In addition to a comprehensive review of the available tests for both input and output systems, the authors have devised some innovative tests of their own. Psycholinguistic models are then applied in an attempt to show that these diverse manifestations originate primarily from an impairment of phonological processing.

This method of viewing single-case studies as the primary empirical source is now standard in cognitive neuropsychology, where they form the basis for generalisations, a very different approach from single-

case studies in medicine which document exceptions.

Although the theoretical status of single-case studies will remain controversial, and not universally accepted by neuroscientists or clinicians trained in epidemiological methods, the book will prove useful for those wishing to expand their knowledge of psycho- and neuro-linguistics, especially speech therapists for refining their methods of investigation of patients with language disorders. The description and analysis of a detailed investigation of lexical and sublexical processes make the book particularly useful for them. Neurologists may wish to familiarise themselves with a diagnostic approach they are unlikely to come across in any other of their research interests.

FC ROSE

Paediatric Neurosurgery. 2nd Edition. Surgery of the Developing Nervous System. Edited by MCLAURIN, SCHUT, VENES and EPSTEIN. (Pp 604; £93.75.) Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Ltd, 1989.

The first edition of this book appeared in 1982, and the second edition appears, as did the first, under the auspices of the Paediatric Section of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. It is a very important publication and deserves a place in every Neurological and Paediatric Department. The standard of production and illustration is very high, the format of two columns on each page makes for easy reading and handling, and its price of £93.75 represents extremely good value, especially in comparison with other recent neurological and neurosurgical texts.

The space devoted to each section is a reflection of the specialised fields in paediatric neurosurgery: developmental abnormalities 151 pages, hydrocephalus and intracranial hypertension 86, neoplasms 137, trauma 63, vascular diseases 23, and infections 15. Furthermore this distribution should underline the need for paediatric specialisation within neurosurgery, something which is still not accepted by all neurosurgeons in the UK.

For the specialist paediatric neurosurgeon, it should provide a useful ready reference to much of the literature, albeit with a heavy American slant. For the neurosurgeon who does not regard himself as specialised, it provides a very valuable, and often practical, guide to conditions which he may not treat very frequently. It

may also persuade the "generalist" that his department would be better for having a more specialised member of the team. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the sections on congenital malformations and hydrocephalus. The book is especially recommended for the serious trainee in neurosurgery, whether or not specialisation in paediatric neurosurgery is planned. The sections dealing with developmental anatomy and pathophysiology should be read by all trainees and by those who purport to teach neurosurgery. This reviewer certainly became very aware of his own ignorance in many such fields, despite dealing habitually with some forms of congenital malformation.

In general each subject is adequately covered by brief historical review, (even Rasputin gets a mention in haemophilia) the developmental anatomy and pathophysiology, natural history and therapy. The book's value is enhanced by much sound practical surgical sense, clearly written by those who have much experience, and who are used to facing the inevitable complications of much treatment. It is admirable that there is a chapter on the moral dilemmas in the management of children with some congenital abnormalities, although I had hoped that the author would be more courageous and express his personal views, including those upon the competence of surgeons in general to embark upon specialised procedures. The chapter dealing with the problem of stroke in children is excellent, and will provide a most valuable guide as much for paediatricians as for neurosurgeons.

But there are criticisms of this large and important book, and they arise mainly because of the multi-author nature of the work. There are 72 authors contributing to the 54 chapters, and it may be that authorship in this book provides some measure of recognition of specialist paediatric neurosurgery. However, this has led to repetition and overlapping in many of the chapters, especially in those on embryology, spinal dysraphism, CSF physiology, treatment of hydrocephalus, and management of intracranial tumours. Firmer editorial direction might have avoided this, and the text might have been shortened to advantage. Minor criticisms are the brevity of the section on infections, and the lack of the more "medical" rather than surgical conditions; and the absence of radiotherapy in the management of arteriovenous malformations.

Overall the book is essential reading and a ready reference volume for all neurosurgeons