Pituitary stalk in CT diagnosis of empty sella.
A section on interventional neuroradiology 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 basiphysio, with shortening of the clivus and small condyles, is described under the heading “Basiphysio 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


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 neuropsychologists 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


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 underlie 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.
and for all paediatric neurologists, by whom it should be bought for personal use. I believe it will be the standard text in paediatric neurosurgery for many years to come.

JOHN GARFIELD

Interdisciplinary Topics in Gerontology

There is just one reason which validates the publication of this book, namely a farsighted discussion of the architecture of institutions for demented persons by Michael Manser. He advises: A clear, preferably symmetrical layout avoiding narrow corridors, high levels of natural lighting with large low windows overlooking a busy scene, privacy and thus dignity for each patient with a specific place entirely their own, easy access to a sheltered and secure outdoor place, and a safe circular outside path which if followed will bring the patient back to the point where he started.

Chapters on the definition of dementia, epidemiology, functional imaging and presentation of food in nursing homes were of interest but not innovative. Otherwise there is nothing to recommend the book which is the product of a meeting of an international travelling club in psychogeriatrics in Switzerland. It is expensive, hyped and lacks substance. The chapters on teaching psychogeriatrics degenerate into name dropping. Not one of the four editors has taken a blue pencil to limit the tangential verbosity that obscure the text and two potentially useful chapters on sexual problems and drug treatment in old age are ruined by erroneous translation.

E M R CRITCHLEY


Six years ago, Dr Kimura produced the first edition of his monograph on Nerve and Muscle Electrodiagnosis. This book has become a standard text on the subject and has had several reprints.

In the intervening years, there have been a number of developments in the field, some of which have been incorporated in this better printed new edition. The additions have been concerned mainly with single fibre and macroelectromyography, polyneuropathies, myopathies and disorders of neuromuscular transmission and somato-sensory responses. The recent advances in cortical stimulation with electrical or magnetic stimulators have also been reviewed. There is also a useful section in the appendix with illustrations of wave forms. There has been a slight expansion of the section on recordings from urinary and anal sphincters, however the recent developments in this field are not mentioned. The EMG features of motor neuron disease should be expanded as well as a discussion of the changes during the course of the disease.

The book is slightly smaller than its predecessor due to the use of thinner paper, although containing thirty seven additional pages. There is a convenient index and an increased number of references which follow each chapter. Dr Kimura has succeeded in providing the clinician with a useful update of his book. There is an increasing trend for texts to be multi-authored, with varying emphasis and style. The singular endeavouer of Dr Kimura should be applauded and the book is highly recommended.

M S SCHWARTZ


There are now several monographs available which aim to guide and instruct neurological trainees, neurologists and the many other physicians who undertake the difficult task of treating epilepsy. They vary in their line of approach and in quality. Those which lean heavily on EEG laboratories and the splendid modern sophistications of displaying electrographic data are sometimes guilty of letting their laboratory slips show a little. A few years ago, a paper from such a source in a respected review journal dogmatically asserted that the only merits of phenobarbitone were its cheapness and its suitability for third world countries; it went on to say that phenytoin was contraindicated in women of childbearing age. The modern epileptologist is far beyond this sort of ill-informed cant, but the many non-specialists who deal with patients and their fits need a sound grounding and clear advice as to when and when not to investigate and to treat, which drug(s) to use, when to monitor, when to discontinue treatment, and, how to deal with epilepsy in the special circumstances of the neonate, the elderly and in pregnancy. Most existing texts fall short in some of these issues. Not surprisingly, since these are problems which not infrequently cause dissent even amongst the cognoscenti.

Mervyn Eadie and John Tyrer from Brisbane, Queensland published their first edition in 1973 and the second in 1980. In my opinion this is far and away the best book available on the subject. This third edition is welcomed as an up to date text in its own right, incorporating all the salient advances of the last decade in clinical pharmacology and in our understanding of the neglected but important natural history of epilepsy. Like earlier editions it is in three sections covering the principles which underlie the treatment and basic concepts of pharmacology, the pharmacology of individual anticonvulsants, and the use of anticonvulsants in practice. It is well printed in two columns per page, illustrated with clear line diagrams, graphs and tables; it abounds with key references on all major issues, and above all is plainly and clearly written. If you need to know about the distribution of a drug in CSF, saliva, tears and tissues, its protein binding, clearance and elimination then the book is here for you. If the toxicity, interactions and effects on the foetus and neonate are poigniant issues, the answer, if known, will be easily found. The third section deals with the problems clinicians seen in the clinics and wards, covering classification and discussing the rational drug choices in all the specific types including those of childhood.

This is an excellent book, clearly thought out and well presented. My copy is dirty, stained for the ward office where it will, I predict, worn out by constant use in no time at all.

J M S PEARCE


The potential importance of interferons in neurology, traditionally regarded therapeutically poorly equipped, lies in their antiviral and antiproliferative effects besides, the name is catchy. Discovered in the 1950's but out in the cold until mass production began in the 1980's by recombinant DNA technology, interferon production and treatment have now been assessed in most problem areas of neurology. This collection of review articles represents the first systematic account of their use in neurological disease.

It is useful in that it provides a comprehensive background to the three main types of