interleukins. Several contributors logical roles, pharmacokinetics interferon, their half neurological considered need to be of production; from associated with interferon the influence panencephalitis brain disease. Those unimpressive presented the reported except recent multiple much (bad) and epidemiological ability-recent history. This tool to an imaging and labelling techniques in the critically ill (current concepts in critical care series) edited by W Kox, J Boultbee, R Donaldson. (Pp 188; £93.00.) London: Springer, 1989.

This book on imaging techniques of the central nervous system, lungs, cardiovascular system and the abdomen includes ultrasound, computerised tomography (CT), magnetic resonance (MRI) and the use of isotopes.

In the section on neuroradiology half the text is devoted to technological aspects and a little over five pages to the radiology of life threatening procedures. It is a pity that the opportunity to indicate the role of imaging in this situation is rather cursorily dealt with.

AIDS to the Examination of the Peripheral Nervous System. (Pp 61; £3.50.) Bailliere Tindall, 1989.

The late Hugh Garland taught that the competent clinical neurologist could manage well with only a superficial knowledge of the anatomy of the brain, but was rendered incompetent if ignorant of the peripheral nervous system and its examination. In the same spirit George Riddoch, Consultant Neurologist to the Army, in conjunction with Professor Learmonth of Edinburgh, set up in 1940 peripheral nerve injury centres at Gogarburn and Killearn. With help from Ritchie Russell and McArdle 20 copies of a loose-leaved guide was circulated. It was later developed, and published by the MRC as AIDS to the Investigation of Peripheral Nerve Injuries (War memorandum No. 7). Its importance in filling a real clinical niche has been reflected by its recognition as the standard work which has merited numerous reprints and revisions. The editorial Committee for the Guarantors of Brain under the Chairmanship of Sir John now Lord Walton took it over in 1984 and this new edition was published in 1986.

The format is essentially unchanged: a combination of excellent clinical photographs of muscles being tested, simple clear line diagrams of nerves and the muscles they supply, areas of sensory change with lesions of peripheral nerves, and a list of nerves and the main root supply of muscles. Captions are lucid and precise. The role of distinguished neurologists refining and honing this tool to an indispensable aid to every practising clinician is apparent. This reprint of the 1986 edition fulfils the best standards of its predecessors.

J MS PEARCE


Presenting conference proceedings in book format is becoming more and more popular. In general this is unfortunate as the opportunities for adequate editing and for including original material are small. In the vast majority of cases they result in books of short...
essays, either of well known material or very preliminary observations which are clearly going to constitute a major scientific publication in the future. Rarely are these proceedings very informative. Nevertheless, it is clear that publishing houses are making profits from such enterprises as the proceedings of symposia continue to proliferate. It is clearly "a good thing" to produce a book and conference proceedings are an easy and efficient way of doing this. This preamble is motivated by a general sense of irritation, that the literature is cluttered with such volumes which are of limited scientific value. It is perhaps unfair to focus such venom onto a small offering — but it is typical of the genre.

The book has the merit of reporting a conference where physicists, engineers as well as biologists met together to discuss brain blood flow. None of the excitement which might have been generated by such an inter-disciplinary meeting is conveyed. It is not clear from the book when this conference took place. In any event the publication is in 1989 though I suspect the material may well date from 1987 or so.

The book starts off with an excellent précis of the basic physiological principles of regulating blood flow by A M Harper. Dr Harper's pre-eminence in this field is well recognised and this short chapter is eminently readable by anyone and conveys fundamental basic principles coloured by Dr Harper's personal experience. Dr Rowan, also from Glasgow, reviews the use of radionuclides in CBF measurement. Again the space allocated to him makes this of necessity a short and superficial chapter. It might serve as an introduction. A considerable proportion of the remainder of the book is devoted to the TcHMPAO. Frequently this is referred to as a new rCBF tracer. Newness is of course relative, but reports of this tracer have appeared in the literature since 1985 at least and a recent supplement of the Journal of Cerebral Blood Flow and Metabolism (1988) has provided much more detailed information on this tracer than the present monograph. Some of the chapters are superficial in the extreme, comprising no more than 3 pages.

Each starts off with a statement saying that measurement of cerebral blood flow is of great clinical interest. I suspect that a whole monograph could be written discussing this very point. The evidence presented in the monograph certainly does not convincingly support such a statement. The absence of extensive CBF measuring facilities in routine clinical practice in this country expresses eloquently the point of view of many practitioners. I am not at all sure that reading this volume would get them to change their minds.

There are other chapters, some of them of interest such as that by Derlon and his colleagues from Caen. Unfortunately this is simply a rehash of work published in the open press. The chapters on doppler imaging and spectrum analysis are of some interest and again a reasonable introduction is provided by Hames and Humphries. The five or six chapters which follow this are all very short but more informative than those describing cerebral perfusion work.

I find little to recommend in this volume. I am not clear what readership has been aimed at, but I could find nothing in it that is not available in greater detail elsewhere in easily accessible literature.

__R Frackowiak__

Advances in Contemporary Neurology

This book is the latest volume in the prestigious American Contemporary Neurology series, published by F A Davis. The series includes many of the classics of modern neurology, including Gillman's Cerebellum, Martin and Reichlin's Neuroendocrinology, and Plum and Posner's Stupor and Coma. Although very different, this present volume fits in well with the series. It contains six authoritative chapters from fifteen American contributors, although perhaps only two of the six merit star rating.

The selection of topics is wide-ranging. AIDS and mitochondrial disorders must be at the top of any editor's list of priorities, but the book also contains a FDA-orientated chapter on anxiolysics, which contains long lists of approved indications for different benzodiazepines in the USA. Perhaps the rationale here is the possible separation of hypnotic from anxioleptic effects of post-barbiturate compounds such as busiprone. The initial 50-page review of the neurologic complications of AIDS is outstanding. Brew and his colleagues give an up-to-date and concise account of fundamental research as well as clinical experience. Mitochondrial disorders are also well reviewed, starting with the concept that all modern humans may have descended from a single ancestral woman who lived 200 thousand years ago in Africa.

The whole book is a valuable reference source, and here they range from the Z Wiss Zool of 1856, to DNA studies published in Nature in 1988, right up to date. Other topics include a new perspective on old poliomyelitis, with the development of poliomyelitis syndromes, characterised by progressive muscle weakness and new muscular-skeletal complaints (Dalakas and Hallett). A helpful review of tuberculosis of the central nervous system by Gandy, and a review of the anatomy and function of the human prefrontal cortex by Collins. The standard of writing of the different chapters is a little uneven, but the presentation is never less than clear, and sometimes outstanding. Tables, figures and index are all good. So altogether a mixed bag, but worth the money for the AIDS review alone.

__J D Parer__