both for several weeks I have generally found Levene to be more clearly and less densely written and that the specialised expertise of its multiple authorship has the edge over Volpe’s single-handed and very scholarly alternative. One strength of the American book lies in its author’s strong grounding in neuropathology, an aspect of training which is sadly lacking in British clinical neurology. However Levene and his colleagues have compensated more than adequately by recruiting Dr Beaugerie and Professor G Lyon from Belgium and Dr JC Larroche from France to write the sections on developmental abnormalities and the pathology of neonatal cerebral haemorrhage and ischaemia. Other contributors include 10 from Australia, 7 from the USA and Canada and 8 from Europe.

The standard of production of the book is generally high but there are some printing errors especially in the figures and legends; the ultrasound illustrations lack pointers or scales. The pictures are generally good but in the chapter on hearing defects the illustrations of the Treacher Collins, Klippel-Feil and Crouzon syndromes should have shown newborn babies; the older children’s faces were of little help in this context. The index lets one down more often than it should.

D GARDNER-MEDWIN


The consequences of major head injury are well recognised both as clinical phenomena and in terms of the late neuropsychological defects and the social handicaps they confer. Until recently, the more common minor and moderate injuries have received little systematic investigation. This 1987 international symposium held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, sponsored by General Motors (a praiseworthy, if vested interest) sets out to fill in this gap in our knowledge.

Henry Miller’s conclusions that simulation, exaggeration and frank malingering were common features in those seeking judicial compensation were contentious and now often proscribed; the neglect of his clinical data and many similar observations made before and since, may have led to throwing out the baby with the bathwater. A scientific appraisal of certain litigants with trivial injuries whose symptoms and disabilities appear grossly in excess of those reasonably predicted by their head injury should not exclude the multiplicity of readily understood human ambitions and aims which may make the common man or woman seek more money through the judicial process. Sadly, the preface opens: “Patients with mild to moderate brain injury have significant cognitive and behavioural problems for months after impact.” This assumed bias pervades the whole of the text and is accepted uncritically—even in patients without a graze, bruise or any impairment of consciousness—by the contributors, many of considerable distinction.

The book is in five sections. The first deals with definitions, epidemiology, biochemistry, pathology and experimental brain injury. Part two briefly considers diagnosis, part three clinical management, part four rehabilitation and recovery. Part five, a valuable set of workshops summarises the same ground, but plans future “research agendas”.

Despite the implied criticisms above, this work incorporates a vast amount of important data which is attractively presented. A Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS) of 13–15 defines mild or minor, one of 9–12 moderate injury. Age, alcohol and multiple injuries adversely affect prognosis. Patients admitted with GCS of 13–15 may develop serious and sometimes fatal complications, so that further tests of attention and verbal cognition in the acute stage may improve our power of prognostication. Diffuse axonal injury is an important concept, but since very few patients die its clinico-pathological significance is speculative. MRI detects many lesions in patients with normal CT, and when lesions are shown by both, the MRI lesions are often larger: an indication of the limitation of CT. P1 latencies often used as an index of attention correlate with post traumatic amnesia.

I would strongly recommend this book to all those involved in the assessment of head injuries as a source of data and reference, and as a statement of contemporary views. It is salutary however, to see how widely critical analysis is sacrificed at the altar of the proof of universal organicity. Time may show that the pendulum has swung too far from the opinions of Henry Miller.
Surgery of the peripheral nerves. (Piccin Surgical Techniques Series—Vol. XIV). By G MORELLO and F PLUCHINO. (Pp 392; £136.00.) Published by Piccin Nuova Libreria (Italy) U.K. Distrib: Gazelle Book Services (Lancaster) 1989.

The bold type and full page colour drawings make this an immediately attractive book. It is Volume XIV of the Piccin Surgical Technique series originating from Italy. The text has been translated into English producing occasionally odd phraseology, and such variations as the use of "neurinoma" for neurilemmoma. The basic message is clear and in association with most lucid colour illustrations of the detailed structure of peripheral nerves the text clarifies the need to use accurate micro-suture of the perineurium of individual fascicles for nerve repair rather than crude apposition of the epineurium.

The account of traumatic peripheral nerve lesions and regeneration follows the classical work of Sunderland and Seddon. There is a small section on peripheral nerve tumours but the majority of the volume is devoted to the details of micro-nerve suture and then a series of beautifully illustrated exposures of individual peripheral nerves provides one with a valuable reference book for the surgeon heavily involved in this type of work. It is more questionable as to whether or not this particular highly technical specialisation is part of neurosurgery or orthopaedic surgery. There is certainly a valuable place for its development by someone in any area concerned with trauma patients. For such surgeons this book is a welcome and admirable volume.

GORDON BROCKLEHURST


The impetus for this book and sharing of the title was an international symposium held on an unmentioned date in Wurzburg, West Germany. The volume is the ultimate in brain mapping. The author of each of the chapters is the relevant world authority on the subject. Therefore, it is definitely not merely an ego trip when they refer mainly to their own work in the reference list following their chapter: it is sheer necessity. Who else to quote but the unique expert in the field?

It is the dernier cri in brain cartography. However, one cannot easily avoid the feeling that the great wealth of data was obtained, or rather was "caught" and described almost a statu nascendi; and here lies the strength as well as the weakness of the book. A spirit of immediacy, enthusiasm, marvel and delight emanates from the pages, rooted no doubt in the vast unexplored fields and the potentially wonderful avenues waiting to be discovered.

This spirit is comparable to that of the pioneers who had set out to build the new discovered continent; or, closer to home, reminiscent of the spirit of Adrian, Grey-Walter and the other pioneers of the EEG half a century ago.

Papers written by such personalities as Lehmann, Petsche, Duffy and Desmedt are truly statesmanlike, exposing theoretical guidelines, interpretations, warnings and pitfalls, past and future. Bordering on philosophy these articles are gathered under the collective title "State of the Art" conveying masterfully exactly that. The methodology