This is the fourth edition in a series which began in 1983. The format is the same as that of successful previous editions, presenting high quality review articles that span animal experimental and clinical fields of epilepsy with well known authors working on both sides of the Atlantic.

Experimental areas explored in this edition include mechanisms of seizure initiation and spread, the kindling model of epilepsy and amino-acid abnormalities in epilepsy. The majority of the book is clinically oriented with chapters on the role of the EEG, teratogenicity of drugs and the management of pregnancy in women with epilepsy. The field of new antiepileptic drugs is covered and the position of corpus callosotomy in the treatment of intractable epilepsy is reviewed. Two concluding chapters deal with the problems of the medicolegal consequences of epilepsy and epileptic automatism. A novel and interesting chapter is included on parasitosis of the central nervous system and epilepsy.

Inevitably, it is possible to criticise some of the chapters as being available in a very similar form in other publications. In those volumes particular interest often arises in comparing European practice in the management of epilepsy with that of the USA. Perhaps this is most clearly reflected in the opening sentence of the chapter on the management of seizures during pregnancy. This would suggest that the major concerns in the author’s mind are the “medical legal consequences of caring for women with epilepsy”, a concern that might not be uppermost in the minds of most European clinicians approaching this problem. Professor Porter’s chapter very fully covers the problems of evaluation of new antiepileptic drugs. The chapter does not, however, address the current controversy surrounding the use of cross-over or parallel group designs and nor does it discuss the current problems being presented to investigators in this area by major disagreements that exist between regulatory authorities on each side of the Atlantic on the necessity or otherwise of actively controlled monotherapy studies at an early stage in the assessment of new antiepileptic drugs.

As always, the main value of this volume is that it brings together authoritative review articles within a single volume. There is no doubt that anyone with an interest in epilepsy or responsible for the care of patients with epilepsy will find something of interest within this book and, like its predecessors, it will remain an important review and reference source for some time to come.

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