half of this century is that many submitted papers of this nature have the stuffing knocked out of them by revision at the beshest of the referees, many, consuming reports, which is what this book is, under a fancy title, often cry out for peer review or drastic editing. In this case the problem is compounded by the absence of any unifying theme.

In conclusion, therefore not a book I would recommend, certainly not to neurologists, and psychiatrists would find more meat in a random issue of a general psychiatric journal.

JC CUTTING


The two authors are clinical neurologists based in London, Ontario; Charles Bolton specialises in electromyography and Bryan Young in electroencephalography. Both work in collaboration with the haemodialysis service in their hospital and clearly have long and expert knowledge of their subject. The text is conveniently divided into firstly the scientific background including clinical assessment. Secondly, the largest section covers uraemic encephalopathy and necropathy and various neuro-urological complications of dialysis, particularly dialysis dementia, are described. There is an interesting historical introduction which includes the information that Richard Bright in 1831 published a 2-volume work on the nervous system.

The sections on uraemic encephalopathy and necropathy are extremely detailed running to 73 pages. I did not previously appreciate the complex aetiology of the carpal tunnel syndrome in uraemia and the authors discuss, amongst other causes, the role of the forearm fistula in haemodialysed patients and the role of amyloid. Efficient haemodialysis seems to delay the neuro-urological complications of renal disease and both uraemic polyneuropathy and encephalopathy are becoming increasingly rare. Although this is good news, one senses it unfortunately diminishes the usefulness of these chapters. The excellent section on dialysis dementia presents the same difficulty. Ten years ago the problem was much more common but now it is becoming rare due to greater understanding of the disorder and the effective removal of aluminium from the dialysate.

A problem with a text covering all neurological complications of renal disease is to decide on the degree of detail required for different topics and also on the choice of the proposed complications. For instance there is the rather dubious inclusion of ischaemic stroke in patients on haemodialysis. The grounds one senses that hypertension due to renal disease can be a precipitating cause. The detailed inclusion of central pontine myelinolysis and Wernicke's encephalopathy is more useful although both complications must be rare. Central nervous system infection following renal transplantation and immunosuppression is described and is clearly important.

There is no question that this is and will remain an excellent reference source for neurologists. The authors and publishers have produced a clear and readable text.

NEIL H YMAN

Vascular Brain Stem Diseases: Workshop on Vascular Brain Stem Diseases, Guttersloh, September 1988. Edited by B HOFFERBERTH, G G BRUND, G STEINFELS and H WERGER. (Pp 281; Price: £70.00; DDM 96.00; £33.40; US$ 53.50.) Basel: Karger, 1990. ISBN 3-8055-5031-6

The Bertelsmann Foundation organised an International workshop on Vascular Brain Stem Diseases in Guttersloh in September of 1988. The papers from the meeting are published in this volume and provide a patchy review of the anatomy, epidemiology, investigation and therapy of brain stem diseases. The anatomy of the brain stem is described in the first paper in considerable detail, yet there is not a single diagram. Relevant diagrams are now it is clearly seen, a graphic in the paper describing the vascular supply of the brain stem is described but diagrams are little used, and the most comprehensive detail on vascular anatomy is provided in one of the papers in epidemiology, and therefore some considerable distance away from the relevant text.

The section on Epidemiology is more useful than there are considerable discrepancies between the frequency of the different signs and symptoms in papers by different authors. A useful review of the signs and symptoms in various vascular lesions of the brain stem syndromes is provided. Almost half of the volume relates to the use of diagnostic tools for investigating patients with vascular disease of the brain stem, and ranges from the standard neuro-otological techniques—including electronystagmography, and brain stem evoked responses—through the use of ultrasound to the most controversial techniques of posturography and hemorheology. The problem is that techniques such as posturography, which are not widely validated, are described by proponents of the technique whose evaluation of the results, though positive, is uncritical.

The final section of the book deals with potential therapy in posterior circulation ischaemia, and covers the use of physical exercise programmes, the role of medical therapy, explores the possibility of thrombolysis and assesses the possible role of surgery.

Overall the book provides several interesting insights into problems with the posterior circulation, but there is much that is already published in standard neurological texts, and relatively little which is new.

DAVID BATES


For the clinician who is not familiar with progress in laboratory fields, and for the clinician who will deal with any patient, it is equally difficult to grasp the direction of progress, if there is any, in primary malignant brain tumours. This relatively short and competitively priced book (£50.00) attempts to bring together the two sides of the house, which is so essential if patients are to benefit from, rather than suffer from, so-called therapeutic advances. It may also help to bring home to the laboratory worker that a shorter life may sometimes be more acceptable than a longer one, plagued by the complications of ill-designed and poorly controlled therapeutic trials.

Inevitably the subjects reflect the particular research interests of the contributors. Although the depth is certainly far greater than the "jobbing" neurologist or neuroradiologist will demand, it does provide summaries in those fields for those who are contemplating expanding or changing their current research interests. The contributors are British, American (5) and Swedish (1) and each provides a laboratory work including in vitro biology, oncogene expression, growth factors, and experimental tumours. These chapters clarify recent advances and have full bibliographies. The book is an excellent bridge between the laboratory and the clinical sections of the book. The chapters on imaging and in vivo metabolism, including positron emission tomography are excellent. Those on radiotherapy, chemotherapy and biological response modifiers (immunological and non immunological) are valuable reference texts, especially for clinicians not familiar with those subjects.

My major criticism is that the chapters on clinical presentation may be sufficient for the non-clinician or for the general physician, but their merit greater depth and more selection if the book is to achieve a more uniform standard. It is also a pity that although a chapter is allotted to stereotactic methods, mainly of biopsy, the every day problem of "conventional" or excisional surgery are not addressed at all. If attitudes to this have changed in the light of other "advances" (which may or may not be the case) the reasons for a change should have been clarified.

In summary this multi-disciplinary book can be firmly recommended. My reservation is that the expert in depth is ultimately more confused than those, who, at least, are well aware, can see only the important signposts.

JOHN GARFIELD


This update of Muriel Morley's book The Development and Disorders of Speech in Children (1957) discusses current clinical issues and clearly establishes its aim of "setting clinical practice firmly in a theoretical framework." The contributors are all clinicians in current practice, so the book chapters are both topical and thought-provoking. The newer fields of phonology and clinical linguistics are well represented and there is an emphasis on the impact of these newer fields to the overall understanding of children's problems.

The book has a clear layout in three sections: the first, a theoretical section discussing issues in speech development and speech disorders; the second, a more practical section...
on issues with children who present with specific conditions—e.g. cleft palate, congenital deafness and developmental neurological disorders. The third section is about more language-based disorders, relating to specific language learning disabilities and phonological deficits in reading and spelling disorders. Each chapter is clearly written and presented, with good references throughout. The book is aimed at the speech and language clinician, rather than at neurologists—there is little on the neuropathology of disorders, for example, but it provides a clear exposition of clinical practice and would be a suitable text for any interested professional dealing with paediatric speech and language problems.

In such a good text, it is unfair to single out specific chapters, but that by Howell and McCartney on “Approaches to Remediation” clearly outlines the problems in applying therapy “drills” or exercises to the “real world” and addresses the current issues measuring progress and reporting results. This theme is reiterated by Gibbon and Grunwell, who discuss in more detail the problem of ensuring that skills acquired in the clinical setting are generalised. They suggest factors to avoid this problem. The chapter by Albery and Russell “Cleft Palate and Orofacial Abnormalities” is refreshing in its emphasis on holistic assessment and treatment, rather than focusing on velopharyngeal incompetence in this group of children. The use of case studies in this chapter clearly indicates the importance of differential assessment and treatment.

Overall, the book is a worthy successor to Muriel Morley’s text of 1957 and provides a much-needed addition to the literature on speech and language problems in children. Professor Grunwell is to be congratulated on clearly indexing and on editing the text in a smooth and organised fashion with little duplication in material. I am sure that this will become a standard text in Speech Therapy undergraduate courses and will be a useful addition to clinicians working in the field of child language.

ALISON PERRY


The first published description of kindling was by Goddard in 1967, although the phenomenon had been noticed earlier without recognition of its significance. It is to address this question of significance that this book has been produced. It is the collection of manuscripts from a conference held in Denmark several years ago. As with all such compilations, there is little consistency in either style or in concept; but mixed in with contributions which advance knowledge little (indeed some chapters are thoroughly misleading) are several that are interesting and thought provoking.

The book has a psychiatric bias, and there are chapters concerned with kindling and psychopathology, kindling and behaviour, anxiety, personality, ethanol withdrawal, ECT, manic-depressive illness, addictive behaviour, and panic disorders. Clearly, there are few activities of the human mind (or that of the rat, for that matter) which cannot be attributed to this physiological phenomenon. The original descriptions were made in regard to epilepsy, and epilepsy features here too, with chapters on the process of epilepsy, antiepileptic drugs, prognosis, and kindling epilepsy and behaviour. Just for fun, and not at all obscurantist, there is also a chapter on kindling and drug holidays (by Dr Fog and colleague). A feast of kindling, but what does this all add up to? This is a question to which this reviewer feels unequal. Throughout the book, attempts have been made to extract from indubitable animal-experimental-physiological data to human clinical phenomenon, and yet this seems only dubiously justified. Some stimulating chapters, some deserve to be read, a kindling of interest maybe, but the direct significance of kindling to clinical neurology and psychiatry still seems to me to be unproven.

SD SHORVON


Positron emission tomography is an already established research procedure for specialist investigation in the use of flurodeoxyglucose in studies of brain metabolism. However, radioactive tracers (such as carbon 11 and fluorine 18) can also be used to label drugs extending the principles of biochemistry to the study of the human brain. Sometimes neurotransmitters such as fluorodopa can be used, for example to study presynaptic dopaminergic function in the basal ganglia of patients with Parkinson’s disease. However, the widest and most recent application comes from the use of ligands for binding to neurotransmitter receptors.

Thus the main subject of this book is receptor imaging. There are detailed discussions of mathematical modelling, radiochemistry, image processing as well as different neuroreceptor systems available for study. As in most of these exciting advances rest on basic neurochemical research emanating from the most important use of autoradiographic imaging applied to experimental and post-mortem brain (chapter 2). Some indication of the complex possibilities of chemical synthesis of tracers (e.g. [12]C diprenorphine) are discussed. The practical and theoretical aspects of PET physics and instrumentation are briefly but lucidly reviewed.

This is the background for the main part of the monograph. Thus, subsequent contributors show how widely the method can be utilised to image location of neurotransceptors in the living human brain. The technology has been applied to D, and D, dopamine, serotonin, acetylcholine, histamine and opioid receptors. Indeed, changes in regional dopamine receptor binding in tetralogy lobe epilepsy have already been used to select patients for surgery. In diagnosis, abnormalities in neurotransmitter receptor binding may be helpful in understanding the pathophysiology and treatment of diseases such as schizophrenia and depression. A novel possibility discussed in the final chapter is the use of inhibitors of monoamine oxidase (e.g. labelled paragline or deprenyl) to monitor brain activity in vivo by PET.

To the old adage “Neurologists diagnose rare, eponymous diseases they cannot treat”, might be added, “or treat with ever higher doses of steroids”. The time is ripe for a book devoted to the use of steroids in disease, reviewing the current status of steroid treatment in this area.

This 30 chapter, multi-authored text covers both theoretical and practical aspects of steroid treatment. There is unlikely avoidable overlap between chapters and some on the use of steroids in cerebral tumours refer to the same basic trial, data leading to unhelpful repetition. All chapters are admirably brief, well laid out, duly make their point and provide an up to date reference source to early 1989 and the volume is a useful addition to the literature. However, the basic messages are few. Methylprednisolone is undeniably the most favoured steroid and less side effects are encountered in alternate day usage. Only in cerebral tumours, cranial arteritis, myasthenia gravis and some cases of polymyositis do steroids have a certain role in therapy and just how uncertain is the evidence that steroids are of value in other conditions is quite clearly shown.

The theoretical promise of the new aminosteroids now under trial in head injuries is fully detailed and the trials of frighteningly high dose steroids in spinal cord injury is discussed. This trial has led to a preliminary report based on accumulating data that recommends general usage of steroids in this condition, prior to completion of the trial; although the disadvantages of such doses, especially in the elderly, may have been underestimated at this stage and time.

The volume undoubtedly fills a gap in the literature and does provide further evidence, if any were needed, as to just how difficult it is to achieve convincing clinical trial evidence of benefit and perhaps does not emphasise sufficiently the well known disadvantages of steroids, particularly in the high-dose schedules now recommended.

JOHN P PATTEN


Gerald Stern enjoys a special interest in the problem of Parkinson’s disease and has written extensively on the subject and supported considerable clinical research into its problems. Here, he draws together some 41 contributors and presents us with a comprehensive consideration of many aspects of this particular disease of the basal ganglia.

The book opens with an historical review...