

that may occur. This section should be compulsory reading for every Paediatric Registrar.

The second half of the book adopts a more problem orientated approach. Here there are sections on common clinical problems as they present, and advice on the suitable approach to investigations. The topics here are very well chosen with excellent guidance on eliciting the relevant clinical features before investigations are undertaken. All sections are followed by a small number of highly selected references, which if consulted would serve to open the area to more detailed study.

This sort of publication can only be judged by how well it aids the Paediatrician or the trainee in his day to day management of neurological cases. I introduced this book to my Junior staff in a lunchtime teaching session. The case histories provided a wealth of useful material and already the book has been consulted on more than one occasion in order to aid a decision as to whether a child should be referred on for more specialised investigation in a regional centre. Perhaps most impressively on two occasions recently I have had to retrieve my copy of the book from my Registrar where it had been "borrowed" from the inner recesses of my case. It is therefore already well used.

For its page size it is a thick book, and the small print is taken close to the edge of the page, so that the book has to be fully opened in order to be read with ease. The binding is already starting to fail under the strain. Would a hardback binding add much to the cost?

I am ordering another copy for our Department. Every Paediatric Unit needs one.

RF MASSEY

**Rob & Smith's Operative Surgery: Neurosurgery.** 4th Edition. General Editors: H DUDLEY, D CARTER AND R C G RUSSELL. Consultant Editors: L SYMON, D G T THOMAS AND K CLARKE. (Pp 516 Illustrated; Price: £150 H/cover) Butterworth Scientific Ltd, 1989.

To review a book on operative surgery is a most difficult task. One can find things to quibble about but in my opinion this volume is absolutely first-rate. It is a great improvement on the earlier editions, mainly due to the wider authorship from both sides of the Atlantic.

It is invidious to pick out any particular chapter as they are all comprehensible and of a high standard. The illustrations are excellent. The chapter that I personally found most interesting was that by Charles Drake who has distilled his considerable experience of aneurysms of the posterior circulation. What an excellent choice of authorship this was: his unique experience will be there for all of us to ponder over in years to come. Charles Drake recommends and defends the subtemporal approach to aneurysms at the bifurcation of the basilar artery but I personally have found petronal approach very satisfactory as long as one mobilises as fully as possible the various branches of the internal carotid artery. Of course the crucial importance of preserving the perforating vessels is stressed.

My only criticism is that there is no chapter on 3rd ventricular tumours. Colloid cysts are not indexed and the only surgical approach to

a pineal tumour is a biopsy. I believe that there are occasions when an open surgical approach to the pineal is warranted (I now exclusively use the supra cerebellar approach), while there are considerable advantages to the transcassal approach to colloid cysts rather than the transcortical approach. No doubt this omission will be made good in the next edition.

I have long advocated that the neurosurgical trainee should have a notebook into which he writes tips and ideas on neurosurgical approaches that he learns during his training. Although expensive, I recommend that the trainee should save up, buy this book and unashamedly scribble on its pages and use it as his own notebook. It would be money well spent.

CBT ADAMS

**A Colour Atlas of The Skull.** By B K B BERKOVITZ AND B J MOXHAM. (Pp 112; £25.00.) London: Wolfe Medical, 1989.

In their preface, the authors state that this book has been produced in response to the increasing difficulty in obtaining human skeletal material, and is thus presumably meant to supplement or replace direct contact between skull and medical student. This is obviously a worthy but difficult task, given the fact that the skull is a complex three dimensional object, and in its cleaned and sanitised form almost monochromatic. How well have the authors succeeded in giving the student a working knowledge of this object?

The first section of the book gives standard views of the intact skull, supplemented by smaller labelled line drawings and radiographs of what appears to be the same skull. The small size of the line drawings makes the labels (which are untidy, being neither right nor left justified) difficult to read. The radiographs are in standard clinical orientation, and so differ from the colour illustrations of the skull.

Subsequent sections concentrate on smaller areas and individual bones. These are less successful, since the magnification is held (nearly) constant. This results, for instance, in two pages being devoted to the fairly featureless parietal whilst the seven views necessary to illustrate the ethmoid (35 × 25 × 30 mm in this scale) are concentrated, with labels, onto a single page. The palatine bone suffers in the same way. The book is completed by sections on tooth morphology and eruption (again supplemented by radiographs) and the foetal skull.

The photography throughout is excellent, given the difficult nature of the subject. I found the black backgrounds of the early section better than the varying shades of blue behind individual bones. Many of the prints (eg occlusal views of the dentition p 84) have been oddly cropped, leaving large asymmetrical areas of background colour. I found the labelling messy throughout. In some places long legend lines are used (presumably to avoid the superimposition of black lettering on a blue ground) whilst in other places lettering lies on the ground. The terminology is slightly outdated in at least one case.

Oddly the main competition for this book comes from the same publishers in the shape of McMinn's atlas. This contains no radiographs but otherwise covers the same ground. Referring back to McMinn I realised

that the photographs there were larger, all on a black background, and given a much less obtrusive system of labelling. If you can live without the radiographs I would think that money is better spent on McMinn, who covers much more ground for a few more pounds.

DR JOHNSON

**The Electromyographer's Handbook 2nd Edition.** Edited by RAJESH K SETHI AND LOWERY LEE THOMPSON. (Pp 160 Illustrated; Price: £21.50.) Published by Little, Brown & Co. U.K. Distributors: Edinburgh, Churchill Livingstone, 1989.

This is a cookbook written as an aid to learners of EMG techniques. The book is profusely illustrated with photographs showing stimulation and recording sites for all commonly studied (and some less commonly studied) motor and sensory nerves, together with short descriptions of the techniques that may be used. There are sections on the facial nerve, the F wave, the H-reflex, repetitive stimulation, standard EMG and single fibre EMG with illustrations of results. Tables of normal values have been culled from the literature for both adults and children. A short and pertinent list of references concludes each chapter.

The descriptions of techniques may serve as an aid to those in training but are necessarily of limited length with no in-depth discussion. They are no substitute for practical instruction from a competent electromyographer. Planning a study appropriate to a subject's complaints, evaluating the completeness and technical adequacy of results and interpreting the study are barely covered. The book may have an appeal to learners but they will still need to consult further texts.

M HAYWARD

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## NOTICES

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**The Annual General Meeting of the British Neuropsychological Society** will be held on Thursday 22 March 1990 at the National Hospital, Queen Square, London WC1. Further details from Dr Narinder Kapur, Wessex Neurological Centre, Southampton General Hospital. Telephone: (0703) 777 222 ext 3576.

**The Fifteenth International Symposium on Cerebral Blood Flow and Metabolism**, 1-6 June 1991, at the James L Knight International Centre, Miami, Florida. Information from: Ms Jenny Bernal, Conference Coordinator, BRAIN-91, University of Miami Conference Center, 400 SE Second Avenue, Fourth Floor, Miami, Florida 33131, United States.

**The Eighth International Neuro-Ophthalmology Symposium, Winchester.** To be held on 25-29 June 1990. Applications to: Conference Associates, INOS, Congress House, 55 New Cavendish Street, London W1M 7RE, United Kingdom.