
There is undoubtedly a place for an authoritative review of this curious syndrome and the authors, who have already published a review of 115 cases, provide a well written account which will be of value to Psychiatrists and Neurologists. There are chapters dealing with the history, clinical features and pathophysiology, so that although the whole book may be read in a few hours, it may also be useful as a source for clinicians seeking guidance on the differential diagnosis or treatment of their patients. It is, of course, not only neuroleptic drugs, (whatever that term means), which produce the condition but also, Metoclopramide, Lithium and even withdrawal of Dopa therapy. The identification of less typical cases is helpfully dealt with, and in a very useful chapter on treatment, the authors have assessed published accounts of different therapies, including ECT, and rational guidance is given. The condition is probably more widespread than we appreciate and those who have susceptible patients in their care may be stimulated by this book to study their cases and methods of treatment. There is a great deal that is not well understood and the syndrome may be a useful model for acute disturbance of Dopamine function in the nervous system.

MICHAEL H JOHNSON


Acute back pain, or chronic backache, is the price the human race has to pay for adopting an erect posture. Twenty-six million working days in the U.K. are lost due to back pain. It is the most common cause of early retirement and costs the country more than £1,000,000 p.a. Only a fraction of those suffering from back pain need surgery. However, the incidence of failed back surgery is high and often due to the wrong diagnosis, inadequate patient selection, inadequate procedures, inadequate technique, and lack of commitment on the part of the surgeon. For these reasons, patients are often pushed around between various specialists.

This comprehensive Atlas of Lumbar Spine Surgery is written by a Japanese Orthopaedic Surgeon as a culmination of lecture notes he made for his residents. The main strength of the book is graphical presentation of pathophysiology in degenerative lumbar disc disease and its comprehensive surgical treatment by the author after thirty years experience. This book is in fact one man's understanding of the problem and his method of dealing with it, irrespective of the consensus of views on the subject. The book is fortunately translated by an American Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery. Therefore, the philosophy of the author must be well represented, although the hallmark of American English is quite evident.

The contents are divided into four parts: in Part I the general principles of low back surgery are outlined with the author's own drawings. I found it very useful for my own understanding. It would have been advantageous if the pathophysiological changes had been further illustrated with plain x-ray, myelography or MRI scan, to determine the indications and methods of surgery. In Part 2 the surgical instruments and various methods of bone grafting are depicted. Although neurosurgeons will find it less attractive I would have found it extremely useful had I been an orthopaedic surgeon. In Part 3, various methods of posterior lumbar surgery are well illustrated with diagrams and will be extremely useful to both neurosurgeons and orthopaedic surgeons. In Part 4, anterior lumbar disc surgery may be equally useful to orthopaedic surgeons, although hardly any neurosurgeon would undertake such a procedure.

Although I do not agree with the indications for some of the surgical approaches, I appreciate that a neurosurgeon's views may be equally unattractive to an orthopaedic surgeon. This does not diminish the importance of the book. It is a must in any orthopaedic departmental library. Neurosurgeons would do well to read this book where they will pick up many useful hints, and above all, they will learn how an orthopaedic surgeon understands the problems of disc surgery. As an Atlas it is very attractive, the drawings are quite clear and understandable. In these days of multiple author publications, it is refreshing to read one man's comprehensive views on such an important subject.

RP SENGUPTA

SHORT NOTICES


Copies can be obtained from Academic Bookstore, PO Box 101 28, SF-00101 Helsinki, Finland. Published by The Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters. ISBN 951 653 219 5.


This is an interesting survey of the history, development and clinical problems of hemisphere asymmetry in man and animals. It is written by non-medical scientists and provides a number of provocative conceptual dilemmas for the interested reader.