One of the many excellent features of this book is the incorporation of "case classics". These are descriptions, interpolated in the appropriate sections of the book, and include such superb accounts as Cerebellar Injury described by Gordon Holmes in 1917, Alzheimer's original description of his disease, the first description of lumbar puncture, Huntington's (1872) description of his chorea etc etc. All these are followed by an explanatory comment. This is a most interesting way of adding depth to a subject and it also adds a nice touch of intellectual tone.

The recent developments in molecular biology, particularly as they relate to neuromuscular conditions, are well covered. This book (in soft cover) is reasonably priced, the illustrations are clear, and I thoroughly recommend this book for both undergraduates and graduates. I think, however, that it would be immensely improved by not attempting the artificial separation mentioned above.

LS ILLIS

Recent Advances In Clinical Neurology: Sixth Issue. Edited by CHRISTOPHER KENNARD. (Pp 276 Illustrated; Price £29.95.) Edinburgh, Churchill Livingstone, 1990. ISBN 0-443-041164.

Books such as this are produced to help keep up to date the overworked clinical neurologist who is failing to keep abreast of the modern neurological literature and current trends in the field of neuroscience. Clearly only a limited number of topics can be covered and in preparing this review I have specifically looked to see if the topics are appropriate and if they have been adequately covered with up to date information.

The selection of topics is bound to be personal and I think that Chris Kennard has chosen well. Two chapters that immediately caught my attention were those on Neural Transplantation and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. These are areas that are receiving widespread publicity in the popular press and we neurologists need up to date information to be able to answer our patients' questions.

The chapter entitled Prospects for Neural Transplantation in Neurodegenerative Diseases reviews a lot of literature containing animal experimental data that would not normally be read by a clinical neurologist such as myself and as such is particularly helpful. The authors in addition provide a balanced view of the available clinical information and I now feel much better armed to answer questions from patients with Parkinson's disease and other degenerative disorders regarding "Brain transplants". I particularly appreciate the conclusion which reads "there exists at present no intracerebral transplantation therapy for any neurodegenerative disorder".

Another chapter that tackles a difficult issue is that on the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome—myalgic encephalomyelitis or post viral fatigue. The introduction refers to the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association as being Britain's fastest growing charity and hints at the difficulties created by the Association for clinical neurologists having to deal with patients who think that they might have the disorder. The chapter carries the

authority of the much respected neurological scientist, Professor PK Thomas, and the conclusions therefore are important and hopefully will receive widespread support. The most important of the conclusions are that the chronic fatigue syndrome is a heterogeneous condition, that a variety of neurological disorders may be misdiagnosed as the chronic fatigue syndrome, that no relationship has been found between laboratory findings and clinical status, and that the most obvious risk factor for the disorder is previous psychiatric illness.

A further important chapter on Cerebral Gliomas is written by three contributors from the Neuro-oncology Section from the Institute of Neurology. As might be expected, it tends to emphasise the more aggressive approach adopted by such centres, though overall it is rather more realistic than I expected. It certainly states clearly that cure is rare and aggressive treatment at best prolongs survival. Management of cerebral gliomas is one of the rather more controversial areas in neurology and this review is up to date and provides abundant information regarding the options for modern treatment.

The review on New Therapeutic Horizons in Epilepsy is not limited to therapy but gives information on mechanisms of seizures, new thoughts concerning old drugs, and information on the various new drugs that are at different stages of therapeutic trials. In the chapter on a Systematic Approach to Vertigo I was delighted to see that the authors underplay cervical spondylosis as a cause for dizziness in the elderly and emphasise that dizziness induced by head movement in old people is most commonly a vestibular abnormality and due to cupulolithiasis of the posterior semi-circular canal. The other reviews on Neurofibromatosis, Sphincter Control Mechanisms and Neurological Rehabilitation are of a similar high standard.

All the chapters are well referenced and up to date. Having read them all I feel that I have learnt a lot and sufficient of the information will help me in my clinical practice to justify a recommendation that all my colleagues should do the same. I warmly recommend this volume and look forward to next years' edition.

NEF CARTLIDGE

Surgery of the Cranial Base. By OSSAMA AL-MOFTY. (Pp 356; Price: Dfl 375.00; US\$150.00; UK£ 93.00.) Kluwer Academic Publishers Group, 1989.

At a time of multiple author productions, it is refreshing to have the views and experience of one man, dealing with a wide variety of pathology affecting the skull base from the orbit down to the foramen magnum. There is thus a continuity and interlinking of his ideas of surgery and management and this more than makes up for some lack of depth which might be provided by a chapter written by a world authority confining himself to one particular topic, such as the management of cavernous sinus lesions. The author is an extremely energetic neurosurgeon from the University of Mississippi who is rapidly gaining international respect for his presentations on skull base surgery; and this book represents a review of his expertise in these most difficult tumours.

The book is divided into seven sections:

i) Instrumentation; ii) The Sella and Parasella Areas; iii) The Orbit; iv) Craniofacial Surgery; v) The Posterior Cranial Base; vi) Surgical Reconstruction and Adjuncts to Cranial Base Surgery, in which anaesthesia, electrophysiological monitoring and vii) Interventional Radiology are covered. The illustrations are generally of an extremely high quality and the CT scans and MRI images beautifully exemplify the pathology. The colour plates too are excellent and are very necessary additions to this type of book. The black and white operative pictures with artistic "overlining" of various structures perhaps are not as successful as the author had hoped. It is notoriously difficult to demonstrate the area in anything but colour or simple line diagrams and my own opinion would be that many of the operative photographs could have been deleted and replaced by simple line diagrams. Those who operate on the area will understand immediately the finer points, those who do not operate in the area will not be confused by the excess detail seen in black and white photographs.

The author has performed an extensive literature search which, at the time of going to press, is arguably the best rehearsed skull base review. For that, he is to be congratulated; this is an exceedingly difficult task and has been performed well. The weakest sections in the book are the first on Ergonomics and Power Equipment. One is not quite sure at whom this is directed. The other sections are clearly directed at those who already have surgical experience, for few would tackle the lesions that he has demonstrated without previous experience. That being so, the comments on operating microscope, ultrasonic aspirators and bayoneted instrumentation would be superfluous. The deletion of this section, or a scientific review of the advantages and disadvantages of laser versus ultrasonic aspiration might be considered in a second edition.

Taken as a whole, the book is a useful addition to the library of the skull base surgeon from whatever discipline.

ALAN CROCKARD

Hemispheric Specialization and Psychological Function. By J L BRADSHAW. (Pp 218; Price: £26.95.) Chichester, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 1989. ISBN 0-471-92318-4.

That neuropsychology is an expanding subject is demonstrated by the boom in new books and journals devoted to it over the last decade and by the frequent need to update the former. This book is intended to replace one from 1983, which is barely two student generations ago, and most of the references cited are from the 1980s, which witnesses the wealth of publication that has occurred recently. For neuropsychologists and anyone acquainted with the area it provides a useful summary of recent work, with some thought-provoking discussion of current ideas concerning both hemispheric specialization and other neuropsychological issues.

The book covers most of the usual topics associated with hemisphericity such as language laterality, handedness, sex differences and "cognitive style", as well as straying into various peripheral areas and even into topics only distantly related to brain mechanisms, such as which way protons spin and whether

the side to which babies are held by their mothers influences handedness later in life. As in most discussions of asymmetry, motor control and the co-ordination of action is least well covered here, reflecting the neuropsychologists' frequent neglect of this aspect of hemispheric function, which is a pity given that this area is one which has shown the greatest advance over the last fifteen years or so. In many instances the discussion is merely extended rather than developed by the latest literature, and only in a few are there any really new ideas such as Geschwind and Galaburda's theory of prenatal hormonal determination of handedness and accompanying side-effects, or the distinction between implicit and explicit memory. Where there are important new developments, these are often only tangentially related to hemispheric specialization, as for example in the recent debate on agnosia, or the nature of deep and surface dyslexia, where the question of which side of the brain is involved is only one possible basis of discussion of the problem and may be not the most fundamental.

The author's second intention, to provide a text at a somewhat lower level than before, is less well fulfilled. Most of the discussion assumes some knowledge of the subject and there is little description or illustration of basic ideas or phenomena. Thus the author refers to Sperry's "classic" split-brain work but does not describe it before embarking on a close and detailed discussion of callosotomy effects; and Broca's and Wernicke's aphasia are briefly summarised but only so that someone knowing them could follow what was meant. The book is not to be recommended for students below the third year, nor for anyone who does not know the basic paradigms and effects, but as an overview for more advanced students or workers in the area it is well worth reading—for the next year or two at least, maybe for up to six?

KA FLOWERS

Spinal Cord Compression, Contemporary Neurology Series By T N BYRNE AND S G WAXMAN. (Pp 278; Price £39.72.) Beckenham, Quest-Meriden Ltd, 1990. ISBN 0-8036-1465-9.

Any book outlining the diagnosis and management of spinal cord compression is most welcome. All too often disorders of the spinal cord have been regarded as an unexciting backwater of Neurology. Teaching is generally poor. The diagnostic prowess of our elders, so often ostentatiously vaunted with respect to the brain, tends to fall short of expectation when the disorder lies within the vertebral column. If medical audit—teaching by retrospective enquiry—is to prove its worth, it should attract a greater awareness of any short-fall in the practical management of neurospinal disorders including cord compression.

Not surprisingly, Drs Byrne and Waxman's book carries a message. It is somewhat different from the standard line of thought in Europe and in certain respects limited in its scope—but an important message nonetheless. They concentrate throughout on the clinical analysis of pain as the first evidence of spinal compression, pre-dating motor and other symptoms. They begin with some formidable statement that should alert the most complacent of resource managers:—

In the USA low back pain is second only to colds as the most common reasons for patients' visits to physicians. The number of individuals disabled by back pain grew at a rate of $14 \times$ that of the US population growth between 1971–1981.

The book is well written, the presentation and references excellent. European experience is quoted and earlier work not neglected. But the limitations of the study are immediately apparent. Neither author is a neurosurgeon. They do not set out to discuss traumatic spinal injury, congenital or developmental anomalies, and have reviewed only the principles of therapeutic management. Dr Waxman is Chairman of Neurology at Yale—New Haven and Dr Byrne co-director of the Neuro-Oncology unit. Therein lies their principal interest. Nearly one-third of patients dying with cancer have vertebral metastases, 5% develop epidural spinal cord compression and 90% of this latter group have pain localised to the spine or referred elsewhere as their presenting manifestation. The enshrined message for this group of patients is the need to inquire into any unexplained pain and if those pains cannot be ascribed to a viscus to look to the spine. Where doubt exists magnetic resonance imaging should be performed.

It is tempting to dub this book "cord compression in Miami widows" but this would be too dismissive. Not only do the authors make a valuable contribution to the subject of epidural metastases, but they have much to contribute to the wider concourse of spinal compression that could be read to advantage by even the most experienced Neurosurgeon. Neoplasia whether epidural, intradural-extramedullary, intramedullary or leptomeningeal is fully and informatively examined. One can search many books in vain for percentage figures of different types of tumours and this is no exception. Tumours in children receive scant mention. There are comprehensive chapters on anatomy and the pathophysiology of signs and symptoms, covering such details as the innervation of vertebrae, conus and epiconus syndromes, the occurrence of papilloedema with spinal neoplasms, and the pyriformis syndrome which commonly masquerades as sciatica. The chapter on pain is given as the key to diagnosis with the differential diagnosis covered in chapters on non-neoplastic causes of compression and non-compressive myelitis. The foundation of these chapters seems to be an extensive literature search but I have reservations concerning the adequacy with which such topics as spondylosis, disc disease or Chiari malformations are discussed except in the context of providing a differential diagnosis.

EMR CRITCHLEY

Neuropathology of AIDS By H V VINTERS AND K H ANDERS. (Pp 229; Price US\$129.95.) London, Wolfe Publishing, 1990. ISBN 0-8493-5074-3.

A gap of two years since the last book on the neuropathology of AIDS may seem rather short; yet the rapid progress of our knowledge makes this new publication most appropriate. This is a totally new book which comes from Los Angeles, Drs Vinters and Anders coming from a laboratory which has accumulated a wide experience over the years since this syndrome first appeared.

The book is divided into thirteen chapters which, except for that dealing with the virological aspects by O'Brien, Koyanagi and Chen, are all by Vinters and Anders themselves. The descriptive neuropathology is given the lion's share. Chapter 1 is devoted to the appearances of HIV encephalopathy and its clinical counterpart; we see the various appearances of multinucleated giant cells, the hallmark of the disorder, in their diverse arrangements and distribution. This is followed by the description of the numerous opportunistic infections, viral, fungal, bacterial, and parasitic, the tumours and the vascular complications. Other chapters describe the abnormalities of the white matter, in which the controversial topic of vacuolar myelopathy is given surprisingly little space. The pathology of peripheral nerve and muscle is dealt with in chapter 9, while chapter 10 is devoted to 'miscellaneous findings' which also includes lesions of the pituitary and the eye, while chapter 11 is devoted to paediatric AIDS. Other, non-neuropathological topics are also included though, as expected, they do not contribute greatly: one of these is 'virologic aspects of AIDS and the nervous system'. Put, as it is, at the end of the book, I fear this chapter will perhaps not get the attention it deserves and would have been more appropriate as the opening chapter. Editorial mysteries!

As it is organized, the book is not exempt from some minor repetitions: CMV infection is described under 'Opportunistic infections' and then mentioned with 'Leukoencephalopathy' and again in chapter 9 among the abnormalities of the nerve. These repetitions are, in a sense, unavoidable, even in books written by a single (or few) authors and indeed do not detract from the overall attractions of this publication. Among these I would mention an enjoyable text, a considerable amount of information, some interesting and stimulating pieces of information (the exhaustive description of lymphomatoid granulomatosis, the still little known subject of the 'focal pontine leukoencephalopathy'), and the extensive bibliography. Plenty of pictures too, although many of them, regrettably, are not up to the standard of the text.

In conclusion, a book that, while describing the personal experience of a laboratory in the forefront of the investigations on the neuropathology of AIDS, does not ignore the contribution of other groups equally involved in this topic: a book to recommend to people working in the field. Its price is, unfortunately, what one expects these days; however British readers might take some comfort from the current favourable rate of exchange.

F SCARAVILLI

Medical Ethics in Practice By T R BARD. (Pp 124; Price £28.00.) London, Taylor & Francis Ltd, 1990. ISBN 1-56032-056-7.

This short book of about 120 pages describes a worthy initiative from the Beth Israel Hospital, the staff of which considered how best to look at difficult ethical decisions. After some discussion, three principal themes emerged—that all decision-making must be kept at the bedside, that any ethical programme should not have the status of a formal hospital standing committee with its normal bureaucratic structure, and that any group of people helping the hospital staff make ethical decisions would not be acting on