

behalf of the hospital. Having reached these sensible conclusions, the staff were still left with a number of decisions 'What should be the nature of such a programme? Whom should it address? Who should be included? Should there be a formal agenda?' In the event, it was decided to take the programme forward by a group informally reviewing patients admitted to hospital who had posed ethical issues. The book then follows a rather muddled format—basically a verbatim transcription of the discussion. I am afraid that if a hidden hand wrote down most of what any of us said without editing, the typescript would look superficial and mundane, and I regret to say that this is the case here. An extract will give a better idea than I can.

Chaplain Ethicist: Do caregivers feel that there is a clearly articulated treatment plan for the patient?

Nurse 1: I do not feel there was. The patient was so manipulative.

Psychiatrist 2: We responded in dyads rather than all doing it together. Each caregiver thought that he or she was the caregiver. I don't know whether we have a cohesive plan.

Chaplain Ethicist: The staff seems to have replayed the manipulateness of the patient with an uncoordinated treatment plan for her behaviour management.

Internist: We learned that we all had to talk together, support a single plan, and communicate it within a half an hour.

Nurse 4: Do you think that establishing a contract would be helpful?

Nurse 1: We did that around smoking privileges and some other things; this plan was very graphic and detailed.

Administrator: If the patient needed tests and refused, I said to sedate her and test her. Each patient is different. If we needed to amputate her leg, it would have been different. If she were a child, things would have been different.

Attending Physician: She was not competent, but she has the will.

The book is poorly edited, so that abnormal haematological values are given without their units as follows.

'Admission labs were significant: Na = 139, K + = 5.7 blood urea nitrogen = 82, creatinine = 5.7, and urinalysis = 4 + protein with many white blood cells and gram-positive cocci in chains.

The sloppy nature of the publication should not detract from an idea that many of us might follow with benefit—that we should from time to time sit down and discuss the broader issues of medical practice, not only with our immediate medical colleagues, but also with representatives from other caring professions, and with people from outside the system of health care.

ANTHONY HOPKINS

Neurotransmitters in Embryogenesis. Soviet Scientific Reviews Supplement Series. Physiology and General Biology Vol. 1 By G A BUZNIKOV. (Pp 526; List price \$250.00 SAS Price \$150.00.) London, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1990. ISBN 3-7186-4877-6.

This is the first volume of a series of research monographs translated from Russian. In this case the original was originally published in 1986 and has been translated by Anthony Bastow. This is a stout volume, apparently set from camera-ready typescript. The translator has produced a very readable English version of the text.

Buznikov's central theme is this: there is a group of substances known to the world mainly for their role as neurotransmitters

within the vertebrate and invertebrate nervous system. However many members of the club may be found in embryos before the differentiation of cells recognisable as nervous tissue. What, then, is the function of the transmitters in the absence of nerves?

To some extent this argument is semantic. We could rewrite the above thesis like this:—Early in development a group of gene products are being transcribed: later on we know that these are concentrated in nervous tissue and are there concerned with transmission of nerve impulses. In that form the question of early function almost answers itself, and we might well expect that the substances concerned are doing in nervous tissue what they do best, and have always done, act as mediators of cell-cell communication.

Buznikov's extensive studies on invertebrates (plus Lauder's chapter on vertebrates and Kater & Haydon's on neurite outgrowth) are claimed only to have demonstrated that pre-nervous transmitters exist: the main author is more reticent about their universal distribution and their function. However if not universal they are demonstrated to be widespread, and their many functions (variously as intracellular regulators, transmitters of non nervous intercellular interactions, as local hormones or non-synaptic transmitters) have been enumerated and extensively documented.

On the whole a very useful source of references; too expensive to be affordable by individuals but a necessity for any comprehensive library.

DR JOHNSON

How to get Equipment for Disability. Compiled by M MANDELSTAM. (Pp 501; Price £12.95). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers and Kogan Page for the Disabled Living Foundation, 1990. ISBN 1-85302-095-8

A Kings Fund report (1988) on community services for people with physical disabilities stated that "Aids and equipment supply is the single most confused area of service provision for disabled people".

This practical handbook explains in simple terms the statutory framework behind the provision of equipment for the disabled and offers practical advice and guidance on the general criteria to those who deal with the provision of aids and equipment whether they be Health Service or Social Services based.

The information contained in this book is up to date and relevant to any of us who are asked to make an assessment of a disabled person and would be an excellent source of reference in any Occupational Therapy Department, Social Services or Housing Department.

BARBARA MARSDEN

NOTICES

Section of Neurology, Royal Society of Medicine. Symposium on Molecular Genetics, 25–26 February 1991, London. Further details from Mrs N Lewis, Sections Officer, The Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE.

Regulations for Upjohn prize for Neurosurgical Research of the European Association of Neurological Societies.

A prize of \$3000 is offered by the Upjohn Company and awarded annually by the EANS. Those eligible for the prize should be neurosurgeons under the age of 40 at the time of submission, who are either fully trained or still in the course of their training. Applicants should be either a member of one of the national societies of the EANS or should be supported by such a member. The basis of the manuscripts submitted should be previously unpublished research work, either clinical or experimental or both, of relevance in the field of neuroscience. There are no specific regulations for the format or type of manuscript. Thirteen copies of the submitted manuscript, together with a brief curriculum vitae should be sent to the chairman of the EANS Research Committee before 1 April 1991. The prize will be normally presented during the EANS training course of 1991 and the winner will be invited to attend that meeting and to present their work. The Chairman of the EANS Research Committee is: Professor J D Pickard, Wessex Neurological Centre, Southampton General Hospital, Southampton SO9 4XY, United Kingdom.

The fourth Meeting of the Neurosurgery Research Group of the World Federation of Neurology, 6–8 June 1991, Hiroshima, Japan. Details from The Secretariat, c/o International Conference Organisers, Walsh Japan Company, 1F Royal Building, 12–8 Nibancho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102 Japan. Fax: 03 5275 6994.

Focus on Epilepsy Symposium: cellular mechanisms and pharmacological approaches, 10–12 August 1991, Adèle, Quebec, Canada. Details from Focus on Epilepsy Symposium Secretariat, 3801 University Street, Room 804, Montreal, Quebec H3A 2B4, Canada. Fax: 514 398 8540.