

multiple Sclerosis" in the index nor indeed under "Transverse Myelitis". However, there are very few other deficiencies. A useful chapter on localisation in the region of the pituitary gland is included and not unexpectedly the consideration of localisation of lesions affecting the basal ganglia is somewhat superficial, although the syndromes thought to have their origin in these structures are described. Finally, there is a very useful and comprehensive discussion of coma, its causing eye movement disorders associated with lowered levels of consciousness, but no discussion of brain death, its definition or assessment.

Each chapter is fully referenced and with a publication of 1990 it is to the credit of the authors and the publishers that references are as recent as 1989. This book can be recommended to any student of clinical neurology whatever his age or experience.

JB FOSTER

The Epidemiology of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders. By A F JORM. (Pp 234; Price: £25.00). London, Chapman & Hall. 1990. ISBN 0 412 31520 3.

Epidemiological studies of dementing disease cannot proceed without methods of classification and assessment. Not long ago any elderly demented patient would be classed as suffering from Alzheimer's or cerebrovascular disease but now the talk is also of Lewy bodies, frontal-type dementia and how we overdiagnose vascular causes. Recent genetic linkage studies suggest that even Alzheimer's disease may not be a single disorder. To add to the epidemiologist's troubles there is the problem of lack of standardisation of techniques for assessing dementia when comparing studies from different populations throughout the world.

All these anxieties are amply addressed in Anthony Jorm's masterly and highly readable monograph *The Epidemiology of Alzheimer's Disease and related Disorders*. The early chapters review classification and various methods of assessing cognitive impairment followed by analysis of different epidemiological research techniques and data integration. The rest of the book covers results of studies on prevalence, incidence, mortality and risk factors. For Alzheimer's disease the only confirmed risk factors which have emerged are, almost predictably, old age and family history of dementia. Down's syndrome is only a definite risk factor for Alzheimer's neuropathology and not necessarily dementia. Travel in the South Pacific, tea drinking and nose picking are not risk factors. Epidemiological contributions to theories of Alzheimer's disease are thoughtfully reviewed and the final chapter on prospects for prevention discusses the yet unanswered question of whether Alzheimer's disease is an age-dependent or age-related condition and how this influences possible strategies for control.

Overall, this book has something of value for anyone with an interest in dementia and the principles it expounds spill over into the study of most other chronic neurological disorders. The preface states that the aim of the book is to give a scholarly integration of the knowledge on the epidemiology of the major dementing disorders and this is just what it does. At £25 it's a veritable give away!

DAVID JEFFERSON

Paediatric Epilepsy. Edited by M SILLANPAA, S I JOHANNESSEN, G BLENNOW AND M DAM. (Pp 377; Price: £45.00). Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1990. ISBN 0 871816 07 6.

Four years after Aicardi's authoritative and comprehensive text, and umpteen self-selected consensus conferences about classification and treatment of epilepsy, it is inevitable that a reviewer will compare "Paediatric Epilepsy" with Aicardi's monograph and also that of O'Donohue (11 years old and still going strong).

An editorial quartet of Northmen commissioned 37 other contributors (27 from Scandinavia and Finland, 10 from USA) to produce 361 pages of text. It follows that the 37 chapters are brief, some of such brevity that they are no more than synoptic statements. Insofar as it is possible to give a "Scandinavian" view of epilepsy the Editors have obviously encouraged contributors to present the results of their own research, but the result is to provide a series of narrow and far from comprehensive reviews.

A wag described a camel as a horse designed by a committee, but I will resist the temptation to extend this analogy, though its uneven contour and fragmented form is reminiscent. In acknowledging a constant need to update the knowledge, there is a serious attempt to encompass the largely technological advances of the past decade. But the contributions are too brief to be substantial, too numerous to be easily integrated into a whole. The end result is disappointing.

Nevertheless, there are several worthwhile contributions: one applauds Eeg-Olofsson's plea for an epilepsy classification based on etiology. There is a thoughtful and non-doctrinaire account of neonatal seizures and their management. The most interesting chapters are on "sub-clinical" epileptogenic activity and on a behavioural approach to the treatment of epilepsy. In considering febrile convulsions the question of the dubious role of fever is not addressed, nor is the circular nature of many of the studies in this field recognised. Doubt about the value of drug prophylaxis is acknowledged but elsewhere advice on management is ambiguous. Accounts of various epileptic syndromes are truncated by leaving therapeutic considerations to a separate chapter and a different contributor.

The chapter on primary generalised epilepsies is good and not limited by the wish to emphasise exclusively the Scandinavian studies. By contrast the chapter on progressive myoclonic epilepsies concentrates almost entirely on Baltic myoclonus. Pretty coloured SPECT images are interleaved between chapters 18 and 19. One of the illustrations refers to chapter 18 and others to chapter one: siting influenced more by economy than by relevance.

In my view, iatrogenic effects on cognitive function are the most important and worrying aspects of the management of childhood seizures, but, because of the compartmentalised approach, discussions of these aspects are left to brief chapters on cognitive function and drug treatment. Even there, the off dire effects of Benzodiazepines are not mentioned, nor are they emphasised in a chapter in the rationale for AED therapy, where the emphasis is overwhelmingly on pharmacokinetic rather than on clinical aspects. This aspect is also notably absent from the chapter

on monitoring drug concentrations. I could not find any mention of placebo responses.

It is difficult to know for whom this book is intended—it will probably have historical interest for the Editors' fellow countrymen but I am afraid this treatise does not fulfil the need for an updated handbook of paediatric epilepsy. I hope Aicardi or O'Donohue will produce another edition soon.

JOHN WILSON

Clinical Tests of Vision. By L FRISEN. (Pp 212; Price \$71.00.) New York, Raven Press. 1990. ISBN 0-88167-639-X.

Clinical tests of vision—acuity, colour vision and visual fields—are in general poorly understood and badly executed by clinicians. These are important tests however and this book sets out to explain what is being measured, the limitations of the various techniques and, if visual function is abnormal, how the degree of damage can be gauged. There are 189 pages of text divided into 13 chapters. The anatomy and physiology covered in the early chapters on the principles of vision tests will be familiar to anyone who is likely to find the other chapters valuable, and indeed it is sometimes difficult to know for whom the book is intended. For example cataract, strabismus and amblyopia are all defined in the text in lay terms. Some extremely useful information is included however and the six chapters on various aspects of the visual field examination are excellent both in terms of theory and practical tips. Drawings of the effect of various visual pathway pathologies on Traquair's island of vision are helpful in envisaging damage. There are 574 references and a good index; the book is well produced and readable although the style is sometimes rather pedantic. The most enjoyable chapter is the last, in which test cases (and answers) are presented. At \$71 it is an expensive but useful book.

JOHN S ELSTON

SHORT NOTICES

Issues in Reading, Writing and Speaking: A Neuropsychological Perspective. (Series: Neuropsychology and Cognition: 3). Compiled by A CARAMAZZA. (Pp 448; Price: Dfl 150.00, US\$ 89.00, UK £52.00). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers Group. 1990. ISBN 0792309960.

Advances in Neural Regeneration Research. Neurology and Neurobiology Vol 60. Edited by F J SEIL. (Pp 422; Price \$85.00). New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc. 1990. ISBN 0 471 56849 X.

The Neuropsychology of Everyday Life: Issues in Development and Rehabilitation Series: Foundations of Neuropsychology. Edited by D E TUPPER AND K D CICERONE. (Pp 313; Price: Dfl 200.00, US\$ 92.50, UK £96.75). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers Group. 1990. ISBN 0792308476.