Groove Meningiomas are dealt with in two brief paragraphs while Tuberculum Sellae Meningiomas occupy a page and Petroclival Meningiomas likewise a page. In a book claiming to address the principles of neurosurgery, descriptions which fall between excessive brevity and over-detailed attempts lead to the feeling that one is driven to the usually quite extensive reference lists for further information. The chapter on Trigeminal and Glossopharyngeal neuralgias and Hemifacial Spasm on the other hand addresses the subject briskly and yet comprehensively.

Some of the recommendations in the chapter on Management of Head Injury would, I think, raise eyebrows even in the most dedicated neurological units in the United Kingdom but it is clear that the Monitoring of Intracranial Pressure is retained more in fashion across the Atlantic than here. By the same token, the detailed description of Ventriculography, a procedure which is hardly ever performed now, particularly in the context of head injuries, is quite surprising. Other chapters that address Spinal Cord Tumours, Vascular Malformations, Syringomyelia and Neural Tube Defects and while brief are reasonably comprehensive and pleasant to read. The book finishes with brief chapters on Traumatic Lesions of the Spinal and Spinal Cord and on Peripheral Nerve Disorders and, again reflecting its American origin, two of the best chapters are by Watts and his associates on Disc Disease and Spinal Canal Stenosis.

The reviewer found it difficult to know quite what to make of this book. It does not set out to be a comprehensive review of neurosurgery, nor does the chapter on CNS Infection, includes 431 references. It might profitably form bedside reading for a junior neurosurgical resident but it is likely that its main interest would be the remarkable series of references appended to most of the chapters. In the presence of so many more clearly focussed texts I wonder whether it will be bought by more than a handful of fairly rich trainees.

LINDSAY SYMON


Ira Black is a major contributor to modern neurobiology. His book contains a very intelligent and readable core which summarises a 1990 view of the chemistry of neural function. He moves from the signalling of rapid events by way of evanescent transmitters to the intracellular consequences which will have longer and longer time epochs. He describes with great clarity the interaction of these imposed changes with the inherent genetic make up of the cells. He shows precisely how these transient changes may produce longer and longer term events within single cells and outside them. The roles of transmitters, intracellular messengers, enzymes, nuclear potentialities, peptides and growth factors are displayed with admirable clarity.

This core is submerged in a more speculative surrround in which it is proposed that the properties of the molecules determine the potentiality of the organism and that the behavioural repertoire of the organism depends on its possession of specific molecules. This provocative suggestion leads to much more specific hypotheses such as the proposal that Alzheimer's disease is basically an error in the handling of nerve growth factor which prevents the proper function of cholinergic basal neurons. I hope he is right in his guess. Even beyond this surround, the book contains an attack on "Functionalist Fallacy and Muddied Metaphor". I find his solution as unsatisfactory as the target of his attack but that does not detract from the value of his core summary.

PATRICK D WALL


The title of this book is an unusual juxtaposition of words and intriguing which is why I agreed to review it. It is presented, I hesitate to say written, in a curiously disjointed style of numerous short paragraphs with a note-like use of words. It is easy to read with limited and highly selected references to the literature.

The underlying hypothesis is presented in chapter 4 and is essentially that vesicles containing neurotransmitters localised in the nerve ending originate on the nerve ending mitochondria by a process which is not clear. The evidence put forward for this suggestion is largely morphological and of a very speculative kind. Molecular mechanisms as to the manner by which phospholipids and cholesterol are incorporated into the vesicle membranes from the mitochondria are conspicuous by their simplicity and vagueness. Indeed in chapter 15 one of the proposals may be interpreted as meaning that the coupling of mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation changes on nerve stimulation. Furthermore in chapter 16 (sec. 16.1.2) the Fo fraction of the mitochondrial ATP synthase is described as mostly of intramembrane subunits of mitochondrial genetic origin. In fact only two of the seven known components are coded for by the mitochondrial genome.

It is these types of suggestion and inaccuracies, together with the highly selected references quoted which lead one to view the speculative hypothesis propounded in this book with some scepticism if not incredulity. Whilst I found the book interesting to read, I could not on balance recommend any serious reader to purchase a copy, despite its relatively low price (£12.00).

J B CLARK

Revue Neurologique


SHORT NOTICES