trophin releasing factor where two pages with substantial references to it (pages 61 and 62) do not occur in the index.

Much as it grieves me to give the thumbs down to something that involves a vast amount of work, I cannot recommend this book.

CM TONKS


In these days of high technology it is salutary to remember that neurosurgeons can be brought low and their patients devastated by humble but ubiquitous bacteria. This relatively short monograph of 218 pages addresses some of the many problems encountered in writing for the scientific community; and to those working in teams in finding a buttress for a disputed point of usage. Many readers will be already capable of writing to a high standard. They will not be disappointed.

The section covering posters and presentations is particularly welcome, as these form a significant part of scientific communication, and much valuable advice on their construction comes from other sources. There are first class instructions for the preparation of slides and overhead projected transparencies.

This book is its own advertisement in that it is written in irreproachable English without ambiguity, contentiousness, error or condescension. It is highly recommended.

B FOWLER

No longer do AED's emerge by serendipity; rather, promising candidates are screened for their effect on known excitatory or inhibitory systems. This book is a detailed exposition of this growth area. There is little new material reported, most chapters are short reviews by eminent workers in the field; they are well referenced. Topics discussed include the influence of the natural history of epilepsy, animal models, and the brain distribution of AED's and chapters on their pharmacokinetics, efficacy and safety. Thirteen chapters are devoted to new AED's individually. Finally, 4 clinical trials are reported. The editors have done well to reduce repetition to a minimum given the number of contributors. The book is nicely produced and easy to read. I found it a helpful overview of the epilepsy scene as it was at the end of 1990.

PAUL MILLAC


This scholarly monograph surveys the life and scientific contributions of one of the most celebrated of doctors. Neurologists will be particularly interested in his seven major books starting with Diatribae Duae Medicopolissipiae (1658) and ending with A Plain and Easy Method of Preserving Those That Are Well From the Plagues of Disease published posthumously in 1691. The best known is undoubtedly De Anima Brutorum Quae Hominis Vitalis ac Sensitiva Est (1672) which provides original observations in comparative anatomy, including dissections of the silkworm, lobster and oyster, and a series of remarkable speculations on sleep, the brain as the seat of the mind and soul; it also expounds his descriptions of the many other biochemical reactions, including myasthenia gravis, myoglobin and cataracts.

Hughes describes Willis’s seminal studies on Neuroanatomy and neurophysiology, and the “Circle of Willis”, probably illustrated by Christopher Wren. Though clearly described by Vesalius in Padova in 1543 and by Fallopius, Fallopius and by Harvey’s teacher Caveriis, none of these early accounts described the full circle and the anastomosis between the anterior and posterior circulations. Willis made signal contributions to the autonomic nervous system, the spinal cord’s circulation, the cranial nerves, and discussed and speculated freely on coma, wakefulness, convulsions, sensation and pain.

In the space of 119 pages supplemented by a detailed bibliography and notes, Trevor Hughes has provided us with a beautifully illustrated account of this extraordinarily prophetic physician. His book is a scholarly exposition based on extensive studies in the Ashmolean museum, the Bodleian library, and in other important archives. He generously acknowledges the many other bibliographical accounts of Willis. Much of this book is devoted to his life and family, to the Oxford intelligentsia, and to the various vicissitudes of periodical warring under Charles I and Charles II.

Neurologists will be grateful for this fascinating little book and for its stylish presentation by the RSM.

JMS PEARCE