sufficiently bizarre characteristics to suggest a diagnosis of pseudoseizure, until further investigation proves the truly epileptic nature of the attacks. Although tonic-clonic and temporal lobe seizures both elevate serum prolactin levels, the same is not necessarily true of extra-temporal attacks. Most important is to think of the diagnosis in the first place. All too often true epilepsy and what are apparently pseudoseizures exist side by side. The gold standard for diagnosis remains video recordings of the attacks with simultaneous electroencephalographic recording. Just how far investigation should go is perhaps a matter of opinion, but one chapter describes long-term subdural recording in twelve patients thought to have pseudoseizures when whom recording was performed revealed, and of these half were found to have true epileptic attacks.

The length but not the value of the book is increased by chapters attempting to analyse the psychological or psychiatric background on which pseudoseizures arise. It is probably too artificial (although neither the editors nor the chapter authors recognise this premise), an attempt to link any common psychodynamic theory upon what is likely just to be a final common path of showing distress. It should be more widely recognised that behaviours which simulate the apparent organic disease reflect the current expectations of the health professionals of the time. The reason that we do not now see the gross hysterical manifestations described by Charcot is that such behaviour is no longer reinforced by medical attention. Perhaps pseudoseizures will follow the same path to near-extinction.

ANTHONY HOPKINS

Handbook of Cerebrovascular Disease (Neurological Disease & Therapy Series /17). Edited by HAROLD P ADAMS, JR. (Pp 702 Illustrated; Price $195.00.) 1993. New York, Marcel Dekker, Inc. ISBN 0-8247-8820-6. The authors (46 in total with 10 from Europe) were “invited to update…several (30) stroke-related topics” and the book is a book of some 728 pages which is aimed at “physicians in training and physicians in practice”. In UK terms I would judge it to be at the level of post-Membership physicians. Although a dwindling number of nihilists continue to believe that nothing much changes in the field of cerebrovascular medicine, evidence of the impact of recent clinical trials and technological innovation is found throughout the book. As is almost universal the delay between writing and publication means that there will always be a few areas which already seem rather dated. Having said that, many of the chapters provide excellent background reference lists up to 1991/1992 and I have already found it a useful book to dip into on several occasions.

The choice of subjects is predictable—they are the ones that usually feature as plenary lectures at most cerebrovascular conferences—young stroke, migraine, the heart and stroke, cardiac surgery, acute management and secondary prevention etc. plus a smattering of “cutting edge” topics such as fibrinolysis, neuro-protection and interventional radiology. The emphasis is certainly on diagnosis and management in the first few weeks with longer term rehabilitative issues being dealt with in the last 10% of the book. The latter issues are neglected in favour of the technological ones—in particular I would pick out the excellent chapters on the Clinical Diagnosis of TIA and Medical Management of Subarachnoid Haemorrhage. The “update” format has allowed some authors to take an overview of their subject and attempt to explain the relevance of sometimes conflicting research results to everyday practice. I would single out the chapter on haematological abnormalities in stroke as an excellent example.

One of the most striking (and positive) things about this book is the increasing awareness of the need for practice to be shaped by high quality clinical trials rather than personal anecdote. Areas where such information is sadly lacking (such as the place of intracerebral haematoma evacuation) are now beginning to stick out like sore thumbs. The price is likely to dictate that this book will be found on departmental library shelves rather than in personal collections.


With the exception of the problems of syncope and postural hypotension, which are now associated with Parkinsonian syndromes, the problems of autonomic dysfunction do not generally figure large in the clinical practice of most neurologists in the UK. All the more reason perhaps to have to hand a substantial work of reference and scholarship such as this book, edited by an acknowledged world authority on such disorders. The authorship is chiefly North American, with some notable contributions from Europe and Scandinavia, most of the authors being practising clinicians rather than basic scientists.

The book surveys in detail available autonomic function tests, with particular emphasis on non-invasive testing, and provides an analysis of the value and limitations of such tests together with an understanding of their basic mechanisms. It is divided into sections on the scientific basis, (anatomy and physiology of the autonomic nervous system), clinical and laboratory evaluation of autonomic function, and a final section on clinical dysautonomias and disorders involving autonomic abnormalities. Each chapter is prefaced by a summary of key “take home” messages which can be read quickly, although these are used as background for understanding the graphs and diagrams in each chapter. Unfortunately, no section on embryological development, which could help in understanding the organisation of the 204 chapters included. The diagrams are clear and comprehensive.

The complex cybernetics of urinary bladder regulation are well described by Bradley, who also describes the neural control of human sexual function and makes the important medicolegal point that intrinsic brain lesions very rarely affect potency.

The second section of the book dealing with clinical evaluation of the autonomic nervous system emphasises the importance of pattern recognition in diagnosis.

The final section deals with specific diseases causing autonomic dysfunction. A provocative chapter by Rabinow emphasises the evidence that diabetic neuropathy, and associated autonomic neuropathy, may have an auto-immune pathogenesis. Another thought provoking chapter by Ochoa and Verdugo gives severe doubt on the concept that reflex sympathetic dystrophy is mediated by the sympathetic nervous system, and concludes that the traditional treatment of the syndrome by chemical or surgical sympathectomy is unfounded.

The section by Bannister on multiple system atrophy and pure autonomic failure is of exemplary clarity and provides useful therapeutic suggestions. Curiously, the chapter outlining the treatment of postural hypotension, relevant to this section is placed close to the end of the book. In syncope even after extensive examination, a diagnosis is impossible in some of the case, and the treatment remains unsatisfactory.

The standard of chapters is uniformly high, and the book is very well presented and for its size, moderately priced.

R LANE


This book provides a readable, comprehensive, and well referenced review of the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. It is edited from Harvard and Boston. Most of the 22 contributors are from North America with sections on virology and muscle histology from Europe and Scandinavia, the longest. It concludes that much of the psychiatric disorder is secondary while pointing out the lack of reports of premorbid and admitting the enormous impact of psychological factors. Little is known about the pathogenesis. Glasgow workers report mitochondrial aggregations in muscle and postulate that this may explain fatigue. This highlights the central problem in relation to the medical model: alterations in immune responses, electromyographic, PET and histological changes found in a proportion of the patients may have little relationship to the dominant symptom.

The history and epidemiology are well covered and mechanisms of fatigue are discussed. Related conditions such as Lyme disease are described. In the final chapter the editors summarise the findings and speculate on pathogenesis. The list of drugs known to cause fatigue covers more than three pages. The laboratory tests recommended are mainly concerned with exclusion of related diseases by serological tests.

Little emerges about management apart from treatment of secondary depression. Acupuncture, immunotherapy, homeopathy, no survived controlled trials but other treatments such as unasserted fatty acids require further study.

This critical account of investigations
This is a lengthy textbook of basic Neurophysiology extending over 17 chapters. There are large areas that are not covered. For example, there are just two pages on the cerebellum, hence a basic grounding in neurophysiology would be essential. Further, the construction of the book is quite unusual. Brief sections are made, followed by an amplified section and then various problems of differing complexity are posed. Although help for the more taxing problems is available, answers are not always provided. I well recall being tormented by this approach as a BSc physiologist student. Whilst this method is guaranteed to exercise one’s thought, it isn’t what he says. It would be appropriate for advanced graduate and of particular use to medical undergraduates. It would be appropriate for the more advanced graduate and of particular usefulness for students of Neurophysiology. For the busy Clinical Neurologist, other sources of reference would be more suitable.

CH HAWKES


This useful addition to the limited range of texts aims to provide neurologists, neurosurgeons and neuro-oncologists with 'a broad knowledge base on the pathology of brain tumours'. It is a book which also might appeal to neuropathologists and research scientists. At just under 600 pages it is a little over half the size of 'Russell and Rubinstein' and inevitably it is less comprehensive particularly concerning diagnostic histopathology. Where it particularly scores is in the introductory chapters (100 pages) on tumour biology, epidemiology etc. which give an excellent overview. The author's chapter on classification is an interesting historical review which describes the evolution of taxonomic activity.

The next 300 pages are devoted to an account of brain tumour pathology based on the recent WHO classification. Although he espouses this, he clearly exercises the right to open-mindedness: 'In principle, its suggestions are followed in the present book'. Some chapters are too brief, eg the macroscopic description of gliomatous cerebrum contains the contradictory statement 'the brain is slightly deformed but maintains its normal shape'. One knows what he means but it isn’t what he says. The discussion of immunohistochemistry in these chapters is more up to date than the equivalent sections of Russell and Rubenstein. These chapters usually give comprehensive reviews of controversial areas and resist the temptation to provide a definitive interpretation. As a result the book is frequently stimulating and would be of great value as an introduction to many unresolved problems in human neurooncology. It is the sort of book you would give to a postgraduate student at the start of a research project to get them in the right place. It is well referenced up to 1991 (3142 in total), however the index is limited.

PINCE


Any new publication in this field will have to justify its position and I am satisfied that in this one can. This book covers the important field of drug-induced movement disorders in twelve well organised chapters.

The topics covered include acute dystonias, drug induced parkinsonism, acute akathisia, tardive dyskinesias, neuroleptic malignant syndrome, anti-depressants and movement disorders, movement disorders in psychiatric patients, levodopa induced dyskinesia, dopaminergic drugs. In addition there is a final and useful chapter by Anthony Lang covering drugs that may perhaps not be commonly recognised as inducing abnormal movements.

The individual chapters are consistent in style, easy to read, clearly laid out, well referenced and edited. Attention has been paid throughout to definitions. This will make this volume appealing to non-movement disorder specialists who are increasingly being required to assess patients suffering from the side effects of drugs acting on the CNS. Contemporary concepts of the likely underlying mechanisms of drug effect in the CNS and the production of dyskinesias and their putative relationship to movement disorders in general are emphasised. This volume makes the strong point that in any patient with movement disorder the possibility of a drug effect (or side effect) must always be considered.

This work clearly fills a gap in contemporary publications. At the US price of $70 I would consider it good value.

LJ FINDLEY


This fascinating book is in essence a comprehensive manual on the methodology of in vitro electrophysiological studies. The editors have canvassed widely for experts in this increasingly complex field and have presented an up to date and in depth description.

The book is divided into nine sections. The first two sections deal with setting up experimental preparations with a particular emphasis upon brain. Of equal importance, there is also a chapter on recording from Xenopus oocytes which is highly relevant due to the ease of introducing mRNA derived components into this cell type.

Subsequent sections approach the problems of stimulation and perfusion techniques, electrode manufacture and the technology necessary for recording the signal. A complete section is given to the methodology of recording from both intra- and extracellular sites and provides a detailed presentation of one of the most powerful electrophysiological techniques that has been developed in modern times, namely patch clamping, permitting the study of individual ion selective channels.

Section 7 examines the analysis of reflex pathways using paired recording sites, transmitter release and synaptic transmission, ion selective electrodes and imaging calcium transients. The final part deals with aspects of data recording and there is also a chapter titled 'Recording on a small budget', a somewhat pertinent factor these days.

In summary, this book is of considerable interest to the experimental ne-robiologist and is clinically germane if only to give an insight into the investigation of the fundamental processes upon which the central nervous system is based.

IS SCHEFFER


Any new comprehensive neurological text has to compete with the two volume works by Asbury et al, and with Swash and Oxbury. Moreover the place of the large text is brought into question by the vast array of CD material and the add-on series of texts and reviews. The advantage of a book is accessibility, but size and weight limits its usefulness. The all well designed and padded Preliminary add-on reviews and CD are their being more up-to-date, and containing more information.

In recent years only Brain and Waterton, in my opinion has been Victor and Adams’ record of five editions since 1977. How does the fifth match up?

The basic arrangement of two column text, small numbers of references and simple line diagrams and radiographs is excellent and unchanged. The emphasis is on an understanding of pathogenesis organised from symptomatology and pathology, avoiding the tedious systematic diagnostic survey by region and disease. The only snag is repetition and irritating cross-referencing between the general sections and the specific syndromes.

Although some aspects of therapeutics feel a little dated, there is much new material including MRI, genetics, developmental and hereditary metabolic disease, psychia-try, neuroimmunity, the whole drug and dopaminergic chapter and most clearly presented in consumable nuggets. Such mastery of a huge subject by two authors of vast experience is remarkable. The scrutiny of many sections by other experts must have helped a great deal, and is briefly acknowledged. If one can command such counsel, and maintain the one or two author format, the resulting text

with extensive documentation gives a clear picture of the present situation.

BRYAN ASHWORTH