
This beautifully produced little volume has an instantly exciting title. A distressingly large proportion of neurosurgical work consists of re-operative interventions, and as neurosurgery continues to expand to deal with more difficult problems it doesn't seem likely that the necessity for re-operation will diminish. Re-operation is seldom taken as a subject for discussion and many articles and chapters tend to neglect the question of re-operation because of the greater interest in first operations which eliminate the pathology and prevent the need for subsequent procedures.

This book is however some of a karass, a collection of things which ought to go well together but somehow don't. The chief reason is the inevitably increasing sub-specialisation by surgeons. The section on non-neoplastic malformation for residual mesial epilepsy would only be of pressing interest to specialist clinics faced with this type of problem. The need to revise shunts in hydrocephalus is of course extremely common. It differs but little from the original indications for operation and hardly deserves a separate description except when complicated by such features as slit ventricles and subdural collections. Likewise the recurrence of gliomas is so prevalent and the decisions to re-operate so difficult that they too may be considered as part of the original pathological process. When it comes to indications for re-operation on pineal or putitary tumours, cranioopharyngiomas or spinal tumours then considerations relating to approach and restructuring the objectives may be very different between one tumour and another.

One of the strengths of this book lies in its section on radiology. Also valuable is the radiology discussed in the clinical sections written by surgeons. The section on non-neoplastic cervical and lumbar spinal disorders repay careful reading. Re-operative treatment for chronic pain is pretty much the same as operative treatment for chronic pain and the same applies to treatment of arteriovenous malformation. The discussion what to do with failed neurectomy operations is however again well worth study.

The section on syringomyelia does not appeal to this reviewer and is chiefly devoted to consideration of the initial operation rather than dealing with recurrent or residual problem. Only Chiari malformation in association with syringomyelia is addressed whereas the most difficult problems concerns with intramedullary cavitary are those where repeated operations, particularly repeated replacement of spinal stents, have contributed to the formation of intramedullary adhesions. It is a fortunate patient in the United States who escapes placement of shunts into his syrinx and such shunts often blow. It is the patient who has inevitably contributed to meningeal fibrosis with results that may become progressively more dismal as re-operations progress.

The concluding paragraph on legal aspects of re-operative surgery is a thoughtful and thought provoking piece and rounds off this collection of well illustrated and perceptive essays which although slightly patchy certainly deserve a place in the library of all those engaged in active clinical practice in our speciality. B WILLIAMS


It is not easy writing books aimed as this one is at audiences with varying degrees of background medical knowledge. As the Preface says it is aimed at a wide readership which will include parents of children with cerebral palsy as well as professionals from health, education and social services. However, when I tried the first two sentences in this book (which were used terms such as "central motor deficit" and "non progressive pathologically") on a random selection of six health workers in my developmental assessment centre, none grasped the full sense and two failed to get any sense of the meaning. What I wonder will the parents make of sentences such as "infection of cerebral tissue in early fetal life resulted in central neuronal and appearance of polymicrogyria presumed secondary to disruption of neuronal migration"?

The first part is the somewhat scientific discussion of the classification, prevalence and aetiology of cerebral palsy. It might have been useful to include a discussion about the findings of epidemiological studies leading on from which the recurrence risks following the uneventful birth of a child with symmetrical motor disorder might have been summarised.

The second and largest part of the book attempts to set the problems facing a child with cerebral palsy against a developmental background. I am afraid I personally found this rather boring. Statements ranged from a crashingly obvious "restricted movement limits or prevents interaction with the environment", to the faintly depressing with an impression of rather spelling out what the child can't or will find difficult to do rather than what the child can do (in this sentence I have carefully avoided any reference to gender—in the book, babies are rather irritatingly female throughout). I found no mention of local or international parent support groups, nor of useful contact addresses of relevant organisations.

I found the section on assessment and therapy the best. Whilst slightly repetitive, there was a useful exposition, borrowing heavily on the work of Mulcahy and Pountney on the development of postural control and measures needed at each developmental stage. Dribble control is not mentioned, nor to grind a personal axe is instrumental gait analysis. Powered chairs get three lines. If this section had been expanded readers would have been left more optimistic about their charges—or more able to ask informed questions where they felt their children were missing out on possible treatment options.

RO ROBINSON


This nicely produced multi-author publication is principally composed of contributions made by British neurosurgeons and initially contributed to a course on neurosurgery organised by the British Council. The editors run this course and have achieved a high standard. This publication has been carefully written and produced and gives some hope for those of us who fear the deplorable decline in standards of British neurosurgery brought about through the relentless fiscal pressures which continually force our standards downwards relative to the rest of the world.

Many of the sections are excellent. The difficult problems of the management of subarachnoid haemorrhage in relation to the management of non-haemorrhagic deterioration and the timing of operation are discussed in a balanced way. A more authoritative statement of why it is that no one knows what to do with any individual case could hardly be found. There is an excellent section on Doppler sonography which is difficult to follow for someone who has no access to such equipment, and the relevance of transcranial Doppler to subarachnoid haemorrhage is also authoritatively discussed. The review from Jacobson on lumbar spinal stenosis is one of the best I have seen on this subject, not least because he refuses to make the subject jump to the reader's eyes like a fly to the many flies likely to be encountered in surgical practice. In commenting on the section on syringomyelia the present reviewer is somewhat handicapped. If he were able to determine whether or not Venn diagrams are really a helpful way of handling large numbers of patients with multiple pathology and protein symptomatology he would be better pleased. If the speculation about filling mechanisms was backed up by a rather more convincing explanation the author might also find his ideas more widely accepted.

The section on glioma biology is almost incomprehensible to a non specialist but the section on treatment of malignant cerebral glioma is well balanced and thoughtful as is the section on the surgical management of neuroma and meningioma.

This book makes no pretence at being comprehensive; to those who attended the course in Edinburgh and Glasgow there are some striking omissions, for example the craniofacial work of Hyde, but it is a well balanced and up to date volume which deserves a place in every neurosurgeon's personal library and should be carefully studied by those going for higher surgical qualifications in these Islands. B WILLIAMS


Neurology is ideally suited to teaching. The illustrations and words. In this booklet, cap-