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**The American Neuropsychiatric Association** will hold its Sixth Annual Meeting on July 21–23, 1994 in Newport, Rhode Island, USA. The meeting will be a joint session with the British Neuropsychiatry Association and the programme will include invited lectures, platform and poster presentations, and videotaped case demonstrations. The meeting theme is "Subcortical disease in neuropsychiatry". Information regarding this meeting and requests for abstract submission forms can be obtained from: Stephen Salloway, MD, Chairman, Scientific Programme Planning Committee, Department of Neurology, Butler Hospital, 345 Blackstone Blvd. Providence, Rhode Island 02906, USA. Tel. +1 401 455-6403; fax. +1 401 455-6405.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Chronic Pain: Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy: Prevention and Management.** By HOOSHANG HOOSHMAND. (Pp 202 Illustrated; Price: £76.00). 1993. Florida, CRC Press Inc. UK Distrib: London, Mosby-Year Book Europe Ltd. ISBN 0-8493-8667-5.

"Chronic pain is being mismanaged universally. Impatient surgeons try unsuccessfully to excise pain, internists load the patient with narcotics and depressing tranquillisers. Chiropractors try to cure everything with their fingers. Acupuncturists shoot darts at the patients". So begins the introduction to this 168 page book. Disciplines from dermatology to psychiatry are attacked for branding patients with inappropriate and unhelpful labels, and prescribing treatment that often worsens their condition. This theme continues throughout.

The initial chapters cover the history and anatomy of RSD and the crucial involvement of the sympathetic nervous system (SNS). The diffuse anatomical nature of the SNS and bilateral representation explains the failure of surgical techniques. Stress, eustress, the limbic system, disuse and ephatic (scar) pain and their role in the development of RSD are described. Aetiology, diagnosis, prevention and management of RSD complete this volume. Thermography is promoted as an essential tool in early diagnosis. Referred pain, trigger points and electrical injuries are well covered.

Diagnosing RSD in the early stages is often difficult. Investigated appropriately with thermography, followed by vigorous treatment with physiotherapy, sympathetic nerve blockade and antidepressants, rather than narcotic analgesics, will produce good results. Late stages of RSD are easy to diagnose and very difficult to treat. Dietary counselling (avoidance of stimulants and alcohol) is stressed and patients urged to

adopt a different lifestyle. Much of this is reasonable advice, although the emphasis on, and illustrations for, thermography were not always convincing. Frequent repetition of favourite themes irritated rather than enlightened. There are many typographical errors, and the writing style hinders clarity. A thorough revision would considerably improve this work without detracting from the content and provide a useful addition to this fascinating field.

R D E BATTERSBY

**Multiple Sclerosis: Its Impact from Childhood to Old Age. (Major Problems in Neurology Series 126).** By HELMUT J BAUER and FOLKER A HANEFELD. (Pp 177; Price: £30.00). 1993. London, WB Saunders Co. Ltd. ISBN 0-7020-1606-3.

It is not surprising that something of a research industry has developed on the back of epidemiology in multiple sclerosis. Surveys are easy to carry out, if somewhat laborious, and they generate concepts through the use of large numbers, thus satisfying both the intellectually curious and the statistically cognate. Over the last decade, population based surveys of patients with multiple sclerosis, involving many thousands of cases, have defined the natural history of the disease and show surprising consistency of results despite marked variations in methodology. *Multiple Sclerosis: Its Impact from Childhood to Old Age* summarises the clinical experience of 660 patients with multiple sclerosis from Gottingen studied over the last 15 years. The clinical features in this cohort are considered on the basis of age with a further emphasis on practical aspects of the disease, its treatment and management.

Others have described more cases, but Professors Bauer and Hanefeld establish beyond doubt, that multiple sclerosis can manifest in childhood and the diagnostic pitfalls and presentations in this age group are well described. The clinical features in young adults from Gottingen provide a comprehensive survey of symptoms and signs, each analysed in sub-groups defined by age, duration of the disease and disability, and with many useful tables; but the authors do not make clear that these frequency data are not point prevalence morbidity statistics or lifetime risks for individual manifestations of multiple sclerosis observed in their population based cohort. In older age, the practical issues are disability and the causes of death in individuals with multiple sclerosis; here, Professors Bauer and Hanefeld discuss in detail the often neglected issue of suicide in multiple sclerosis.

The book concludes with a critique of management which contains useful guidance on what is offered by state and charitable institutions in different countries. Throughout, the approach is practical and—despite the epidemiological substrate for this monograph—retains an emphasis on the individual with multiple sclerosis as person and not as statistic.

As the latest issue in the Saunders *Major Problems in Neurology* series, individuals will do well to buy this volume and keep their collection intact.

ALASTAIR COMPSTON

**Gamma Knife Surgery: A Guide for Referring Physicians.** By JEREMY C GANZ. (Pp 163 Illustrated; Price: DM69, US\$45, Softcover). 1993. Wien, Springer-Verlag. ISBN 3-211-82476-6.

Jeremy Ganz has written an excellent introduction to the field of Stereotactic Radiosurgery. It comes in the guise, as its title suggests, of a guide to physicians thinking of referring patients to a unit with a Gamma Knife, the method of radiosurgery which was launched by Professor Lars Leksell in Stockholm in 1968. The layout is logical, clearly set out and the style lucid, if at times somewhat pedantic. What emerges is a useful description of the method, the radiological principles behind it and an outline of the conditions for which it has been used, the doses used, the results obtained and some of the difficulties and side effects encountered. It provides a good summary of the basic information which would be useful to a newcomer to any form of radiosurgery whatever the system of stereotactically directed beams of ionising radiation to be used.

DAVID FORSTER

**Epileptogenic and Excitotoxic Mechanisms** (Current Problems in Epilepsy Series No. 8). By G AVANZINI, R FARIELLO, U HEINEMANN and R MUTANI. (Pp 158; Price: £32.00, US\$64.00 H/bk). 1993. London, John Libbey & Co. Ltd. ISBN 0-86196-386-5.

This volume represents the proceedings of an advanced course on epileptology held in Sicily in January, 1992. It is mainly intended for people with a special research or clinical interest in epilepsy, and it focuses on the underlying mechanism of epileptogenesis, especially in the developing brain. It is a slim volume with 14 brief chapters, approximately half of which are from Italian laboratories, and the other half from leading laboratories in North America and Europe. The format and scope of the chapters vary: some give a general overview of their assigned topic (with useful up-to-date citations on the whole), while others present more detailed recent findings in an article format.

The topic of epileptogenesis is approached mainly from two angles: 1. a conventional cellular, electrophysical approach, and 2. a developmental approach. Attempts are made to correlate the developmental profile of different types of seizure manifestations in the neonate with the maturation of inhibitory and excitatory transmitter systems and neuronal connectivity, thereby providing insights into the mechanism of initiation and propagation of seizure activity.

In addition, the process of amygdala kindling in adult and neonatal rats is the topic of two chapters. Other chapters that discuss general animal models of epilepsy or mechanism of action of antiepileptic drugs, appear to be more tangential to the central theme of epileptogenesis.

David Prince provides an excellent, succinct summary on the membrane properties that account for the progression of epileptogenic events. Uwe Heinemann and co-workers successfully combine an electrophysiological and a developmental approach