strongly recommended to all who are engaged in the management of people with strokes.

JOHN MARSHALL


Neuropsychiatrists share common interests in a range of brain diseases, the more so as modern neuroscience is applied to the biology of neurodegenerative and functional disorders. This volume is a sophisticated presentation of neuropsychiatric conditions, concentrating upon the deficiencies, selected movement disorders, epilepsy and the major psychoses. The text is succinct, but conveys the essential information requisite to grasp the clinical features, neuropsychology, concepts of etiology and management of these conditions. There are copious beautiful illustrations, particularly of neuropathology. Each chapter is supplemented by coloured boxes and diagrams highlighting key features and mechanisms. Those of a visual frame of mind will no doubt find this a pleasurable read. There is a list of references to further reading. Clinicians and scientists will find this a valuable introduction to the field, and given the lavish production the cost of £60 is not too excessive.

CD MARSDEN


Localised peripheral nerve lesions are common and, apart from some such as the carpal tunnel syndrome or Bell’s palsy, frequently give rise to diagnostic difficulty. The first edition of this book, published six years earlier, was a conspicuous success. The major justifications for the second edition were the increased use of imaging techniques in the diagnosis of focal neuropathies and the growing interest in peripheral nerve lesions among orthopaedic surgeons. The large number of references in the first edition, which amounted to 1100, has been doubled. John Stewart’s approach is both practical and critical and is prefaced by a succinct account of the relevant experimental pathology and investigative techniques. He displays a healthy scepticism towards many of the silly ideas that have been advanced to explain the thoracic outlet syndrome that have led to much unnecessary surgery. This scepticism justifiably extends to the suggested participation of nerve injury in soft tissues syndrome such as tennis elbow and pyriformis syndrome. His experience, like that of the reviewer, is that many of the musicians referred with possible peripheral nerve lesions turn out to have local neuromas.

The book is comprehensive, but the reviewer was surprised not to be able to find coverage of the focal hypertrophic demyelinating neuropathy as encountered in the brachial plexus, the thoracic outlet syndrome, of the enigmatic condition focal hyper trophic neuropathy, apart from a brief reference to the tibial nerve. These conditions are frequently misdiagnosed and can be mistaken for more serious disease, such as peripheral nerve tumours. The immunological demyelinating form may respond well to treatment.

Reference to hereditary liability to pressure palsies is made, but the book obviously went to press before the recent intriguing discovery that this disorder is usually related to a segmental deletion on chromosome 17, affecting the gene for the dynamin protein of the plasma membrane dystrophy 22. The presence of this condition in a very variable condition is now becoming evident.

Dr Stewart’s book should appeal to a wide audience amongst neurologists, neurosurgeons, orthopaedic surgeons and, not least, those interested in medicolegal work in which peripheral nerve injury tends to feature quite prominently.

PK THOMAS


The first chapter discloses a major weakness of the book, perhaps endemic to all subsequent contributions—of diagnosis. Olsen (chapter 1) writes, “It is not the purpose of this chapter to give a detailed discussion of the various headache syndromes” but he lists the operational diagnostic criteria from the International Headache Society (IHS) Classification. These are mainly criticized by Ninan Mathew (chapter 3): “Although the IHS headache classification has greatly enhanced the precision of diagnosis of migraine and cluster headaches, its application in chronic headache has been less than satisfactory”—an American gentlemanly understatement. Mathew lists these deficiencies and provides a new classification including transformed migraine, tension headache evolving to migraine (drug and non-drug induced), and daily persistent tension headache. 30% of his patients have intractable headache due to “a persistent neurobehavioral disorder”.

“The distinction between tension-type headache and migraine is not always easy.” Solomon points out “the unacceptably low sensitivity and specificity for the diagnosis of tension-type headache” from questionnaires completed by patients, states the differing views on the relationship, and lack of relationship, between tension-type headache and migraine, yet offers no clarification on how to arrive at a correct diagnosis. Are we in the realm of classifiers, codifiers, or the diagnostically destitute?

Section II deals with the structural and functional basis of muscle nociception, pain perception in healthy volunteers including the effect of sex, mood and circadian rhythms. Patrick Wall concludes the section with a thought provoking summary.

Section VI considers the role of pharmacology and Biochemistry attributes fibromyalgia to muscle microlesions (not demonstrated) provoked by over and under activity, and in another chapter experimentally induced muscle damage by ischaemic work, injection of nonspecific algogenic substances as well as specific endogenous agents—5HT, bradykinin, substance P and CGRP. A review of 5HT, platelet enzymes, noradrenaline-enkephalin, noradrenaline and other fibromyalgia subgroups is well planned for more research. Transcranial Doppler studies indicate an instability of the cerebral circulation, and magnetism, the iron-body subluxation phenomenon.

Section IV on central mechanisms of tension-type headache concludes on the basis of decreased plasma and CSF endorphins and EMG studies that a central pathogenesis causes tension headache. However Section V on the basis of muscle tenderness and EMG findings provides evidence of a peripheral component.

The final therapeutic section (VI) has papers on relaxation/biofeedback therapy, stress management, analgesic abuse, psychotherapy, analgesics, muscle relaxants and psychotropic drugs, and ends with a critical summary by Mathew.

This frontier of headache research seems bordered by muddy waters. How can these problems be clarified? Perhaps a start could be made by removing doubt about entities such as “chronified migraine” and “mixed headache”. But reading this book one can detect a great deal of occupational therapy for research assistants, limited treatment for patients and a few new findings on the state of the art and current ignorance on tension-type headache. This conference threw little light on the topic.

JN BLAU


In this, the 12th of Butterworth Heinemann’s International Medical Reviews of neurology Dr J P Whisnant from the Mayo Clinic edits papers from a number of clinicians and statisticians from the US, Japan and Europe on topics related to clinical research in stroke disease. The book is a strange mixture of critiques of clinical measurement and of statistical assessment in the field of clinical trials. One of the chapters, such as that on ‘Stroke Mortality’, provide an interesting and useful resume of recent trials and a summary of current knowledge. Others, such as that on ‘Attributable Risk’, are predominantly a mathematical treatise on statistical methods. It is perhaps surprising that in a clinical sphere which has been so exposed to meta-analyses no British author has been involved and no critique is provided of the technique of meta-analysis and its use in stroke disease.

The individual papers are well presented and the explanations of statistical fact and eponym are clear. Most of the papers relate to trials of stroke prevention and to epidemiology and only in the final chapter are there considerations of primary prevention trials, studies of rehabilitation and consideration of the newest therapies. Nonetheless the volume as a whole is useful to those in clinical neurology and essential reading to anyone planning on setting up clinical trials in the field of stroke research where its comprehensive reviews and severe criticisms of statistical methods will be of considerable help.

DAVID BATES