SHORT NOTICES


This is a congress in honour of Hans Berger, to focus on new methods in quantative and topological analysis of electroencephalography (EEG), evoked potentials (EP) and magnetoencephalography (MEG).


A Festschrift for Merton Sandler in December 1991, bringing together recent advances in neural function, diagnosis, mechanisms and therapy.


BOOK REVIEWS

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Traditionally, the only outcome measure in the treatment of epilepsy has been seizure frequency, particularly in trials of new antiepileptic drugs. If a patient's seizure frequency decreases significantly then the treatment is supposed to be working. Some antiepileptic drugs may, however, change the severity of seizures. For instance, a patient who experiences four secondarily generalised convulsions every month may feel that the quality of life has dramatically improved if the seizures become brief simple partial attacks, even if the frequency does not change at all. It has only recently been recognised that it is not satisfactory to rely entirely on the number of seizures, either as a measure of treatment or when the severity of a seizure disorder is being quantified.

This book contains the proceedings of the first workshop on the Quantitative assessment of epilepsy care held in April 1992 in Oporto, Portugal under the auspices of NATO. It contains 21 contributions from different groups in the subject. Some of these contributions are very good and relevant to the subject whilst others are weaker. The highlight is a chapter by Cramer and Matson which reviews the 3 different approaches to the measurement of severity of seizures that were in existence at the time. The discussions that followed each presentation are also in the book and make interesting reading. The confusion between the issues of the impact of epilepsy in one's life and that of the severity of seizure itself which permeate throughout many of the contributions can also be clearly seen and discussed.

Clinimetrics i.e. the quantitative assessment in epilepsy. This book is a good beginning but it is not the end of the story, much more remains to be done in this area.

JW SANDER


Magnetic Resonance Angiography is now being accepted as an imaging technique, but only a few books which are dedicated to this subject are available.

This book is divided into sections on Principles and Clinical Applications of MRA. Following the introduction to MRA in the first chapter, the next three chapters deal with methods of MRA. The two main methods (Phase Contrast and Time of Flight Angiography) are discussed in detail. Those interested in this technique will enjoy reading the principles behind the different methods and the many parameters to enhance image contrast. Techniques of MRA are susceptible to artefacts. The correct interpretation of pathology depends on the understanding of the artefacts and flow phenomena related to MRA. I was therefore pleased to see a whole well illustrated chapter devoted to this subject. A chapter on clinical diffusion and perfusion imaging, although well written, somehow appears rather artificial in the context of MR Angiography.

Clinical applications of MRA in a variety of cerebrovascular diseases are discussed in the second section. Each chapter has a useful discussion on clinical and radiological aspects of the diseases as well as technical aspects of MRA. The limitations and future role of MRA is also discussed. The book includes two chapters on venography/arteriography of the body. There are also very useful chapters on normal variants and common anomalies.

This is a well written and well illustrated book. It has become available at the correct time when a standard text dedicated to MRA is necessary. Most of the images in this book of are of high quality. I would recommend this book to every MRI Department where Radiologists, Clinicians and Technicians will all find it extremely useful.

ANIL GHOLKAR


Books on dementia are now becoming quite a popular field and many of them attempt to approach another edited collection with a rather jaundiced eye. What makes this book different is that the second part of the title with the majority of contributors having taken some notice of the need to provide a "methodological approach". Apart from presenting generally succinct and often clear reviews on epidemiology, genetics, pharmacology, and psychological aspects, the chapters have, for the most part, included some discussion of the methodological problems which impinge on the issues being described.

The occasional contributor also tries to set particular topics into the context of the overall discussion on dementia. The one major exception of this is De Leon's chapter on hippocampal formation atrophy which emphasises the work carried out by the author's own research group with little attention to the methodological issues.

The coverage of material is wide if not comprehensive with the topics reviewed ranging from the biological aspects of dementia to the more social aspects. There is therefore something of interest for nearly everyone with many of the chapters being written in such a way as to give those interested in dementia from one point of view the opportunity to gain some perspective on the work being carried out by those dealing with other aspects. This book is certainly a useful acquisition for hospital libraries and for those starting to take a serious interest in the problem of dementia.

E MILLER


This is an addition to the Wiley Series in Clinical Psychology and by the list provided, appears to be number 15. It is surprising it has taken the series so long to tap into a disorder which could be considered one of neuropsychology, a point made by the authors in the Preface. Aimed primarily at Clinical Psychologists but also (inevitably) at the ubiquitous "other health care professionals" whom we all wish would buy our books. This volume has a refreshingly psychological outlook on the disorder. Memory, language and other psychological impairments are discussed by a variety of authors who have a firm grasp on current references. After this background, the authors switch to chapters on assessment, management and psychosocial aspects which are both theoretically based but also of clinical importance. One minor disappointment was a lack of a shopping list of how neuropsychologists assess dementia. Perhaps this would only have been of use to...