

journal problems. The third and final section addresses specific disease processes and is comprehensive in all aspects of neurological disease.

I particularly enjoyed the chapters on epidemiology, cellular recovery and neural tissue transplantation. I also found the sections on the measurement of disability, biomechanics and engineering and the application of orthoses and mobility aids to be of value. From the point of view of patient management, chapters on pain relief, bladder and sexual dysfunction, swallowing difficulties and chronic fatigue provide up to date practical advice. The final section of the book, whilst comprehensive, appears somewhat patchy, and if there were any weaknesses in terms of contents and uniformity of editorial control these were here.

However, the editors are to be congratulated in producing a text that is a landmark in its field and will almost certainly run to further editions. Drawing almost exclusively from contributors within the United Kingdom may unfortunately prevent this text from achieving international status. I would advise all neurologists and neurosurgeons to consider this essential reading and to ensure its availability not only to themselves and their trainees but also to the therapists with whom they work.

I BONE

**Dementia Presentations: Differential Diagnosis and Nosology.** Edited by V OLGA, B EMERY and T E OXMAN. (Pp 417; Price: £70.50). 1994. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins. ISBN 0-8018-4681-1.

Although there is undoubtedly much of interest in this book, ultimately I could recommend it only for specialists interested in, or actively involved in, dementia-related research. Despite its title it is not a comprehensive textbook on dementia to be used as a basic reference source. Instead, it raises a number of important and controversial issues related to the subject and presents a timely and often iconoclastic critique of certain specific areas. I feel that it would perhaps have been better titled "Controversies in dementia" or something similar.

The book is divided into five sections. The first deals with the basic issues of diagnosis and investigation of patients with dementia. This section contains an interesting chapter by Oxman and Bayles which discusses whether

normal ageing and Alzheimer's disease are separate disorders, or merely opposite extremes on a continuum. The chapter by Patterson and Clarfield on investigation of patients with dementia contains a very good discussion of all the reversible causes of dementia and a well thought out critique of what investigations should be performed on a newly presenting dementia case.

The second section of the book deals with Alzheimer's dementia. One of the recurring issues in this section is whether there are separate sub-groups of Alzheimer's disease based on age of presentation, pattern of neuro-behavioural abnormalities or other features. The chapter by Blennow and colleagues from Goteborg presents their rather idiosyncratic, but nevertheless very interesting, argument in favour of sub-groups. There is a chapter by Kirshner reviewing the progressive aphasia and other focal presentations of Alzheimer's disease, Pick's disease and other degenerative disorders. There is also a very thoughtful review of language deterioration in dementia by Andrew Kertesz. I was pleased to see that in general the book takes quite a neuropsychological stance and emphasises the importance of careful neuropsychological evaluation of newly presenting patients, and more particularly, the need for careful and detailed longitudinal studies.

Section three deals with vascular and sub-cortical dementias. A major theme here is the inadequacy of current definitions of vascular dementia and the need for more research in this area. Ross and Cummings review the arguments in favour of separating cortical from sub-cortical patterns of dementia and there are interesting contributions from Japanese and Finnish groups on the relationship of hypertension to vascular dementia and the differential diagnosis of vascular dementia and Alzheimer's disease, respectively.

Section four, which in many ways is the most novel aspect of the book, deals with depressive dementia. This covers approximately a quarter of the 400 pages of the book. I know of no other text which deals so thoroughly with this difficult area and it is in many ways a pity that much of this will not reach a wider audience. The editors (Oxman and Emery) provide an overview of the spectrum of depressive dementia whilst Sachdev and Kiloh from Sydney present a very helpful review of non-depressive pseudo-dementia.

The penultimate section contains a review of treatment approaches to dementing illnesses. I was pleased to see that the emphasis towards the treatment of non-cognitive disturbances such as depression and psychotic symptoms rather than cognitive enhancement.

The very final chapter, again written by the editors, really summarises the content of the book and highlights the areas of controversy raised by the various authors.

One of the aspects of the book which is unusual is the mixture of typical review chapters with those reporting original data, more in the form of a "conference proceedings". This is particularly true of the contributions by the editors Emery and Oxman who have contributed to six of the nineteen chapters. It gives the book in many ways the flavour of a personal monograph. The most positive aspect of this approach is that it allows the authors to be controversial and to present unconventional views. The down-side is that it very much detracts from the book as a suitable introductory text for those interested in the dementias but without a great deal of background.

On the whole I would recommend it to researchers in the field, particularly those interested in the behavioural and neuropsychological aspects of dementia, rather than the general reader particularly at the rather exorbitant price of £70.50.

JOHN HODGES

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## NOTICE

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**The 21st International Epilepsy Congress** will be held on 3-8 September in Sydney, Australia. Major topics are: Genetics and molecular biology of epilepsy; Surgical treatment of epilepsy in childhood; Functional neuroimaging; Choice of drugs in childhood and adult epilepsies; Epilepsy and the law; Intellectual disabilities and epilepsy; and The role of psychiatry in epilepsy. For further information, contact: The Congress Secretariat, PO Box 1231, North Sydney, NSW 2059, Australia. Tel: +61 2 956 8333; Fax: +61 2 956 5154.