NOTICE

Announcement from the British Neuropsychiatry Association: 1996 summer meeting

The 1996 Summer meeting will be held on 14-16 July at Robinson College, Cambridge. It will include topics on neuro-development, language, and the presentation of short scientific papers and single case videos by members. The Association's AGM will be held on 16 July.

For further details of these meetings please contact: Sue Garratt, Administrative Assistant, BNPA, 17 Clocktower Mews, London N1 7BB. Telephone/Fax: 0171 226 5949.

For details of membership of the BNPA, which is open to medical practitioners in psychiatry, neurology, and related clinical neurosciences, please contact: Dr Jonathan Bird, Secretary BNPA, Burden Neurological Hospital, Stoke Lane, Stapleton, Bristol, BS16 1QT. Telephone: 01179 701212 ext 2925/2929 or Sue Garratt at the address given above.

CORRECTION

Clinicopathological case conference. *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry* 1995;59:322-7.

Dr CC Tjissen should be included as an author for this case conference, which should read:

Harrison MJG, Teepeen JLJM, Tjissen CC. A case of recurrent headache and neurological deficit. *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry* 1995;59:322-7.

BOOK REVIEWS

All titles reviewed here are available from the BMJ Bookshop, PO Box 295, London WC1H 9TE. Prices include postage in the United Kingdom and for members of the British Forces Overseas, but overseas customers should add £2 per item for postage and packing. Payment can be made by cheque in sterling drawn on a United Kingdom bank, or by credit card

(Mastercard, Visa or American Express) stating card number, expiry date, and your full name.

Neurovascular Surgery. Edited by L PHILIP CARTER and ROBERT F SPETZLER. Associate Editor MARK G HAMILTON. (Pp 1446; £325.00). Published by Blackwell Science, Oxford 1994. ISBN Hb 0-070-11020-4.

This is a highly impressive and well researched text book covering every aspect of modern neurovascular surgery. The editors have assembled 125 contributors who are all well respected in their fields. As a result, the text book is extensive with global reference. The book is divided into six main parts consisting of general principles, occlusive disease, haemorrhagic conditions, vascular compression, spinal vascular disease, and vascular injuries. All sections are well covered and include essential medical neuroanaesthetic and interventional aspects as well as the direct surgical descriptions. Despite multiauthorship, the editors appear to have kept overlap down to an absolute minimum.

What I found particularly impressive was the detail in which the key trials and clinical papers have been documented. As a result, I have found the book useful in extracting key material and figures with ease. The extensive coverage makes this book suitable for interested parties other than surgeons. I just wonder whether it may have been more appropriately entitled "The Treatment of Neurovascular Conditions" so as not to deter the non-surgical community. I would personally recommend this book to neuro-intensivists and neuro-radiologists in addition to neurosurgeons of all grades.

In summary, this really is an excellent book which has been put together by highly respected workers in the discipline of neurovascular conditions. I congratulate them on what must have been an enormous effort.

PETER KIRKPATRICK

Etiology of Parkinson's Disease. Edited by JONAS H ELLENBERG, WILLIAM C KOLLER and J WILLIAM LANGSTON. (Pp 600; \$195.00). Published by Marcel Dekker, New York 1995. ISBN 0-8247-8823-0.

This book, inspired by the fortuitous discovery of MPTP induced parkinsonism in a small group of Californian drug addicts, is a joy to read. It represents an attempt to review and explore all the theories that have been put forward to account for the cause of Parkinson's disease (PD); a review that extends to a bibliography of 2413 references! In addition to presenting the possible theories, it openly criticises and highlights the shortcomings of studies set up to unravel the aetiology of this common yet incurable disease.

The book opens with an excellent discussion on the causes of parkinsonism and how these relate to idiopathic PD (IPD). The discussion then goes on to highlight the difficulties in identifying IPD from other forms of parkinsonism, especially other neurodegenerative conditions such as multi-system atrophy. The difficulty in establishing and verifying a diagnosis of IPD antemortem seems to have been helped by the advent of functional imaging with the PET scanner. Although this technique is not widely available, problems are already appearing on the horizon as pointed out by Golbe in his chapter on the genetics of PD. He makes the point that some twin studies have shown abnormal fluorodopa PET scans similar to those in PD, in twins who do not have PD but only a postural tremor; a point further discussed in later chapters on the neuroepidemiology and comorbidity in PD.

This initial discussion on what constitutes PD is fundamental to understanding what may cause it. However, in addition the pathology of the condition has to be explained and Forno gives an excellent account on the neuropathology of PD. This chapter makes another important point—namely, that although the dopaminergic nigral neurons bear the brunt of the pathology—they are not the only neurons to be involved in the disease process. This point must therefore be taken into account when any theory purporting to explain the aetiology of this condition is put forward.

The diagnosis and pathology of IPD having been established, the question then arises as to what causes the neurons to be lost. Irwin and Langston begin by presenting possible mechanisms of cell death, although no discussion on the ontogeny of the nigrostriatal pathway is given. This is a shame as it may be relevant to the mechanism of cell death in the disease state. Nevertheless, the possible cellular mechanisms that cause the dopaminergic neurons to be lost is then taken up in later chapters that specifically address the possibilities of endogenous and exogenous toxins as aetiological agents, including a discussion of MPTP itself. This discussion on toxins raises the further question as to whether levodopa itself is toxic to the nigral dopaminergic neuron and so catalyses the disease process. A significant amount of in vitro work is omitted from the discussion but the overwhelming work from those studies agrees with the conclusion put forward in this book—namely, that although this is a theoretical risk there is no convincing evidence that it is a dominant factor driving the pathogenesis of this condition.

The only criticisms I have of this book are minor ones, in that some of the chapters read rather too much like lists (for example, chapter 7) whilst others are unnecessarily technical (for example, chapter 11 on assessment of predictors). Overall, though, this book is good fun. It presents a large amount of information in an interesting and critical way and I would therefore strongly recommend it to all who wonder at the cause of this major neurodegenerative disorder.

ROGER BARKER