

Akathisia and Restless Legs. Edited by PERMINDER SACHDEV. (Pp 425; £45.00). Published by Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995. ISBN 0-521-44426-8.

Restlessness, both mental and physical, is a symptom of a number of neurological and psychiatric illnesses. This book focuses on two of the commonest causes: akathisia (to which more than two thirds of the book is devoted) and restless legs (a brief coda). Since it is written from the authors' perspective of psychiatric practice it is largely devoted to neuroleptic-induced akathisia, and details the authors' own studies of acute akathisia and the entity known as tardive/chronic akathisia, as well as thoroughly reviewing the pre-existing literature. It is claimed to be the first extended work on akathisia, and certainly this area has been neglected in comparison with drug induced extrapyramidal side effects and tardive dyskinesia.

The reasons for this neglect become apparent throughout the text: the lack of pathognomonic features, the absence of widely accepted diagnostic criteria or rating scales, the difficulty of assessment and measurement in patients who are often suffering from concurrent psychotic illness, the lack of definitive understanding of pathophysiology. All these issues are addressed lucidly, and solutions suggested (diagnostic criteria, rating scales) to guide future research in this difficult subject. The heuristic value of considering akathisia and restless legs together is apparent in the sections on pathophysiology and treatment; the latter will be of particular value to those encountering only occasional patients with these disorders.

Price may preclude the purchase of this beautifully produced book by those not directly involved in the field, but it should be in hospital and departmental libraries and is certainly worthy of selective reading by anyone regularly prescribing antipsychotic drugs, and by neurologists with an interest in movement disorders.

ANDREW LARNER

Carotid Endarterectomy. Principles and Technique. By CHRISTOPHER M LOFTUS. (Pp 242; £129.00). Published by Waverly Europe Ltd, London 1995. ISBN 0-942219-69-4.

This well illustrated book is a practical guide to carotid endarterectomy. It encompasses the personal view of the author, who has extensive experience with the technique. The three sections are divided into fundamentals, radiographic study and surgical technique. The first section provides a synopsis of the literature which is concise and well referenced. The key studies are cited, and the author provides his personal interpretation of them. Guidelines for specific situations are also given but these are again a personal view and bias strongly towards surgery. This is particularly so for the asymptomatic carotid stenosis.

The remainder of the book provides beautifully illustrated cases and an approach for most surgical eventualities. The surgical section provides colour intraoperative photographs which are accompanied by labelled drawings illustrating the relevant anatomy. The operative pictures are particularly well reproduced.

Although this is a well illustrated

approach to carotid endarterectomy, my main criticism is that the operative alternatives have not been well addressed and that the recommendations for surgery are rather dogmatic. Nevertheless, I found this a useful contribution and would recommend it to carotid surgeons.

PETER KIRKPATRICK

Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry/VI. Edited by HAROLD I KAPLAN and BENJAMIN J SADOCK. (Pp 2804; £225.00). Published by Waverly Europe, London 1995. ISBN 0-683-04532-6.

This text, now in its 6th edition, has expanded to two volumes, with over 2800 pages, and encompasses the new Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, DSM IV. Comparison with the previous volume shows that many chapters have been extensively rewritten and much new material has been added.

On looking through the index of the book to locate a number of topics I wished to read for the purpose of this review, I found myself constantly distracted by interesting subjects and words, which I felt obliged to consult before reaching the item I intended to look up. Dipping into the text in this way was extremely enjoyable and informative, and all the sections I read were clearly written. Case vignettes illustrating clinical syndromes and scenarios, tables and diagrams all add to make the text accessible.

The majority of the text is of course unaffected by a transatlantic perspective. Some clinical information is, however, very American in its outlook and does not address other perspectives—for instance, the controversy that exists over dissociative identity disorder (multiple personality disorder). Some sections of the book—for example, methods of billing and payment, USA training issues and examinations have little relevance to the British psychiatrist. In contrast, there is no information on the Mental Health Act and our particular models of community care. Large sections on geriatric psychiatry and child psychiatry are present, but the book is unlikely to be the prime text for people training in these specialities.

Without doubt this is a text that should be in every library and if not for its expense, on the trainee psychiatrist's shelf. It would, however, require supplementation from a British text.

CAROL GREGORY

Merritt's Textbook of Neurology. (Ninth Edition). Edited by LEWIS P ROWLAND. (Pp 1058; £72.00). Published Williams and Wilkins, London 1995. ISBN 0-683-07400-8.

In this latest edition of this well known textbook of neurology first published in 1955, Lewis P Rowlands has set out in the customary approachable and logical manner to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of basic clinical practice in neurology, and succeeds. From chapter 1 covering the presenting symptoms of neurological disorders through the application and description of widely used investigations and the major pathological entities neurologists are likely to encounter in their practice, there perfuses a user friendly style which is

to the authors' credit. This is exemplified by the references which follow subsections and provide a manageable list of reviews and more specific papers which we found useful in a trial period using this book as a day to day reference book for ward work. It is also refreshing to see that the importance of neurorehabilitation is acknowledged by the sizeable section given up to this subject and outlines in a manageable fashion the principles which many of us still find difficult to grasp. If there are criticisms to be levelled it is that in a rapidly changing speciality it has been a little slower than others in incorporating some of the more recent advances in molecular genetics, basic immunology and changing prognoses for newer treatments of neurological disease. This is clearly important in a keenly contested slot in the literary market where it must compete with old favourites some of which have a less painful price tag. In summary this is a useful and easily digestible book for those learning the basic concepts of clinical neurology and has a light refreshing style which encourages return to its pages.

NEIL ROBERTSON

Neurotransmitter Release and its Modulation. Edited by DAVID A POWIS and STEPHEN J BUNN. (Pp 356; £27.95 pb, £65.00 hb). Published by Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995. ISBN 0-521-44616-3 pb, 0-521-44068-8 hb.

This book presents a series of incisive and interesting accounts on the organisational control of neurotransmitter release at chemical synapses both within the CNS and in the periphery, especially the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and adrenal medulla. It evolved out of the 13th International Congress of Neurochemistry in Sydney in 1991, and is written by a number of experts in a clear informative and up to date way. The book is divided into five sections, the first discusses neurotransmitter release whilst the following chapters discuss the modulation of this release process and the clinical relevance of this modulation is dealt with in the final part of this book. Each chapter summarises a given aspect of the neurotransmitter release process and skillfully combines both an overview of the subject with data from the key experiments. This is no mean achievement as so often books such as this lose sight of their general readership and assume a detail of knowledge that can lose even the most conscientious of readers. Furthermore these various aspects of synaptic behaviour are not viewed in isolation but as the book progresses their clinical relevance becomes more apparent and is accordingly discussed. There are therefore chapters at the conclusion of this book that discuss the role of neurotransmitter receptors in hypertension, depression and recreational drug use.

However, of particular interest to most clinicians is the number of issues that this book raises which fly in the face of conventional preclinical teaching. Examples of this include the following.

It is well known that the calcium concentration inside the cell is critical for neurotransmitter release, but as important is the spatial distribution of calcium within that cell, an area discussed in the opening chapter by Burgoyne and Cheek. This topic of the role of calcium in the release process is