

In the past 10 years a large number of neurologists and ophthalmologists have gained a great deal of practical personal experience of the use of BTX in the treatment of various movement disorders. They have shared this knowledge at scientific meetings but until now there has been no comprehensive source for reference or manual for practice. Both of these books set out to redress this deficiency and they are both very welcome additions to the literature.

Both books give clinical descriptions of the conditions suitable for injection treatment and brief accounts of other methods of management. There are detailed accounts of injection techniques and doses illustrating the indications of the cervical muscle anatomy being better clearer in the English book. Strabismus, blepharospasm, hemifacial spasm and cervical and laryngeal dystonia are covered comprehensively. Upper limb dystonia and spasticity are also well covered.

More novel indications receive less space and some—cerebral palsy, therapeutic prosthesis and oscillopsia—are better dealt with in the English volume while spastic problems and facial wrinkles receive more in the American.

The American book is based on the Consensus Development Conference sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and Food and Drug Administration in 1990 but most of the chapters have been updated with references up to 1993. Like all multi-author books particularly in rapidly advancing fields there is some overlap and repetition and there are analyses of relatively small series of patients which characterise the introduction of any new therapeutic technique. The foreword is by Alan B Scott, the ophthalmologist who first used the toxin on a patient with strabismus in 1977 and contains an interesting personal historical perspective by Edward J Schatz, the toxicologist who first worked on the toxin in 1944 and was responsible for the early supplies to Scott.

The English volume is considerably smaller and shows more consistency of style indicating firmer editorial control. The section devoted to basic science and toxicology is much briefer although coming a year later it is able to give a clearer account of the sites of action of the different botulinum toxins. The appendix contains a useful list of resources and patient organisations.

One or other of these books is an essential companion for anyone starting an injection clinic or expanding his repertoire into the less common indications for this important and exciting addition to the neurological therapeutic armament. Dr Moore’s book will be in my clinic and probably open but I am pleased to be able to refer to the American volume when preparing lectures on the subject.

JOHN PILLING


I am not a fan of conference proceedings. Too many are collections of second-hand manuscripts of already published work, or worse, badly written papers of dubious quality which would never pass for publication in a reputable Journal. This volume therefore came as a delightful surprise and I read it from cover to cover with fascination.

It is not, in spite of its title, a general source book on movement control. Only one article (but that a very good one) mentions the cerebral cortex, and none address topics such as modelling of the nervous control of three dimensional limb movements which is so popular these days. The main themes are locomotion, and the behaviour of sensory receptors. Of the two, the chapters on locomotion are probably the most interesting since they deal not only with vertebrate systems, but also with the beautiful detailed studies of neural circuitry in invertebrates. When seen together, such work provides a powerful insight into the mechanisms of locomotion. Studies of human walking are not included in this compilation. This is unfortunate, but perhaps only an indication of the wide gap that separates the purely descriptive human work from the neurophysiological detail studied in animals. The chapters on sensory receptors are good, but often tend to focus on minutiae which, although of interest to experts in the field, are less attractive to those who wish to use this collection as an up-to-date source of general concepts.

Finally, it is interesting to note the very small number of articles produced from authors in the United States, despite the fact that neuroscience there is more vigorous than in any other country in the world. Perhaps North American neuroscientists think that these are quaint backwaters of research, lacking all the excitement of modern imaging techniques. If so, then perhaps the present volume will bring some of the excitement of the field to their attention as well as the possible benefits that such research could bring to the large numbers of people who have difficulties in posture and locomotion.

JOHN ROTHWELL

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