
What was this odd disorder being described in San Francisco gays, we used to wonder as neurological registrars in the London of the early 1980s. What was the cause of this syndrome of acquired cell mediated immunity, was it the habit of sniffing amyl or the other strange habits of the denizens of the city known in our youth as the home of hippies and other exotic alternative lifestyles? Before long we were being asked to see a homosexual patient admitted with what turned out to be cerebral toxoplasmosis and our education in AIDS related neurology had begun. Later came the hysteria in the tabloid press epitomised by the Sun's infamous front page "10 symptoms of AIDS" (which included headache) allowing the birth of a second disorder familiar to those of us then working in inner-city neurology, "Fear of AIDS" adding a new dimension to the management of tension headaches in young males. The phrase had been replete with medieval archetypes of sin and imported foreign pestilence, a grim backdrop to the entrepreneurial selfishness of Thatcher's new Britain. It was just as well for neurologists that the outgrowing, neurological mimic, could now be replaced with a brand new multi-organ, multi-stage infectious disease whose manifestations in the nervous system were, it became clear, protean. Suddenly a whole lot of new multiple choice questions could be generated for postgraduate exams.

Michael Harrison of the Middlesex Hospital and Justus Meltzer of Johns Hopkins have now produced this invaluable monograph on the neurology of AIDS. They review the epidemiology and virology of the "neuropathic, neuroinvasive, neurovirulent" HIV whose infection presents with a neurological syndrome in 10-30% of cases. All the neurological faces of AIDS including soro-conversion disorders and the difficulties presented to neuropsychologists of pre-AIDS HIV-positive patients are covered in a thorough, helpful and practical way. We learn of the different profile of opportunistic infections seen in children and the difficult problem of progressive encephalopathy in these children. In the chapter on peripheral nerve disorder in AIDS there is a nice discussion of the differential diagnosis of neuropathic symptoms and their treatment. Perhaps new to some neurologists in this chapter is the point that Bell's palsy should trigger HIV testing in an "at risk" patient, which still means gay and drug-abusers in the "pattern 1" countries of the west (and South America). Opportunistic infections by fungi, viruses, bacteria and parasites are of course thoroughly covered. In this section the intelligence that pigeon droppings are a main source of cryptococcosis has put Trafalgar square into a different perspective.

Rounding off the book are chapters reviewing the common neurological symptoms in HIV infection (more helpful than the Sun's earlier review) and the role of various neurological investigations, in which the difficulties of radiological differential diagnosis in AIDS patients are detailed. Throughout this book is beautifully illustrated with well placed colour pathologi- cal photographs of the conditions discussed, excellent up-to-date scan images and clear line diagrams. The text is liberally broken up by helpful tables and management flow diagrams. These high standards and the excellent readable, informative text make this book a must for all neurologists who might come across a patient with the neurological manifestation of AIDS, which includes all of us.

CHRIS ALLEN


It is a measure of just how far psychiatry has come over the past two decades that Hirsch and Weinberger have been able to put together a book of this substance on schizophrenia. It is striking, particularly with the American input, just how little space is allowed for the fanciful notions of psychoanalysis with regard to aetiology and treatment. The book is divided into four major descriptive aspects, biological, aetiological, clinical, and the real story of lies, physical treatments and psychosocial aspects. Most of the individual chapters are excellent, especially those based on the neurochemical and clinical aspects. The book is a welcome addition for researchers and valuable information for clinicians, for instance the chapters on treatment and Taylor's chapter on risk of violence. The absence of sections on particular topics (for example, suicide risk) is compensated for by good indexing which yields a range of perspectives on the subject.

Like most multi-author books it cannot hope to give the complete picture and some of the background and colour are missing. The arbitrary sequence of chapters reflects the individual authors' interests rather than fitting into a logical whole. This is a book for physicians who already know something about schizophrenia and beginners who need to acquire a real understanding of the disorder should turn to McKenna's excellent book "Schizophrenia and Related Syndromes..."

I have a few cavils. There is no reference to the Soviet psychiatrist Snezhnevsky, despite the fact that his system of classifications is now to form the basis for the further search for an understanding of the disease. Another touch of political correctness is the chapter on homelessness which happens to be excellent but is akin to putting a chapter on...