
The first chapters of this major new book set treatment in the context of modern accounts of the pathophysiology, classification and diagnosis of epilepsy. In doing so the book could be said to be a comprehensive textbook of epilepsy, which to my mind such a large tome really ought to be. At present it does lack an account of epidemiology, a gap which will shortly be filled by a review in the JNPP Neuroepidemiology series. The historical introduction describes the contribution of the National Hospital, Queen Square, and especially its Victorian neurological giants, Gowers and Hughlings Jackson, to the treatment of epilepsy. However the rest of the book is distinctly international with authors drawn from all over the world.

The chapter on pathophysiology is hard going for those who had forgotten the more intricate details of the T-type calcium channels and different types of GABA receptor, possibly why the proprietors of some larger pharmaceutical companies have not been adequately motivated. Fortunately all is eventually revealed in a later chapter on the mechanisms of action of antiepileptic drugs. The strength of the book is in its coverage of the advantages and possible disadvantages of each of the antiepileptic drugs. Another strength is the detailed description of the investigation for and remarkable success of surgical treatment in selected cases. Each of the chapters on drug treatment includes a box summarising the editors' personal view of each drug. The other chapters would also have been enhanced by the Scott report, by executive summaries. Every textbook is bedevilled by the march of time and perhaps the trials supporting the superiority of magnesium sulphate in eclampsia, for instance, were not published in time for the book to be brought to press. In some of the chapters information is given in a didactic fashion without the detailed referencing which is needed in a book of this type. A remarkable omission is the obscure passages and inclusion of one or two chapters this important new book should mature into the international standard comprehensive textbook of epilepsy. It is already a valuable resource for all who treat epilepsy.

RICHARD HUGHES


The editors describe this volume as a "generously international and comprehensive book" which aims to "distil current knowledge in a form suitable to the neurologist practising in tropical zones and in temperate regions where imported cases are seen". Unfortunately, because the contents are arranged entirely by disease and grouped by their causes, a neurologist is bound to find it of limited value unless he knows the cause of the complaint from the outset. The way round the problem is simple. It has been admirably handled by contributors to the standard large textbooks on tropical diseases. An author with great experience of neurology in the tropics—Binninghurst and Osuntokun have done the job well in two recent volumes—could have provided an overview which draws attention to common symptom complexes such as acute brain syndromes (often caused by more or less extracerebral infections such as typhoid fever which merits only a passing mention in the volume under discussion), cord lesions, or polyneuropathies etc and summarises likely causes in different regions of the world.

Such an introduction would make the whole text vastly more useful to the clinician puzzled by the unfamiliar and would have added little to the total bulk of this volume. It would have disarmed critics like myself who are obliged to ask how the text can be called comprehensive when it mentions only in passing, or not at all, typhoid and typhus (both so-called because of the clouding of consciousness they can produce), leptospirosis and Lyme borreliosis. These are important because they are treatable. Vascular diseases of the brain and cord should have been mentioned because they are very common in the tropics, often complicating hypertension, diabetes, or haemoglobinopathies.

The editors claim to have considered the plight of the practitioner with limited resources. Unfortunately none of their authors, 19 of whom work in the Western World compared with only one who prac-
tices in tropical Africa, all seem impressed by the fact that they would feel extremely insecure without access to MRI scanners and to facilities for culturing bacteria, let alone patient's relatives with the wherewithal to buy drugs which are often unimaginably expensive to those on third world incomes.

Having criticised the lack of any attempt to summarise, the contents, it has to be said that the often Western oriented approach, credit must be given to many of the chapters which are excellent. Warrell on cerebral malaria, Bill on schistosomiasis, Dumas on African trypanosomiasis, and Wadia, Spillane, and RICHARD HUGHES on the neuro-ophthalmic aspects of neurosyphilis, are outstanding. The book is marred by the statement that recommendations on treatment are undergoing constant review and the interested clinician is advised to phone a Louisiana number to find out how to treat a case. Actually, the WHO recommendations on multidrug therapy have been virtually unaltered for 14 years and differ substantially from those in the text. Of pure neural leprosy (with no skin lesions) there is no mention, despite its obvious importance to neurologists.

In 1973, JD Spillane edited a volume also entitled Tropical neurology which was largely a handbook of diagnosis for physicians interested in neurologists practising in various tropical locales. It was strong on the syndromal approach and is still of considerable value. To be sure, much has been learnt since then and some of those who were the successor to Spillane, would have been greatly enhanced by his insights. In his preface, Spillane stated that it will be many years before a comprehensive account of tropical neurology could be undertaken. I believe that it could be now but, sadly, this is not it.

CHRISTOPHER ELLIS


Anxiety and insomnia are very much Cinderella subjects, even within psychiatry. Epidemiological surveys have established the enormous prevalence rates of anxiety and insomnia but seem to have been incapable of drawing attention to the high prevalence rates of anxiety and insomnia among patients hospitalised for cancer, AIDS, schizophrenia, and depressive illness. Insomnia, over the last 10 years, has become a hot topic in the field of psychology and neuroscience and its importance for understanding the causes and consequences of sleep disturbances and disorders is now clear. Anxiety and insomnia remain somewhat neglected in the field of sleep medicine and in the recent reports of the National Sleep Foundation indicate that although there is a need to improve the care of people suffering from sleep disorders, there is little evidence that more people are receiving treatment. The authors of this book have compiled a comprehensive text on these two topics which is based on the best available evidence and which will be a valuable resource for clinicians, researchers, and policymakers interested in the field of sleep medicine and the treatment of anxiety and insomnia.

It is a pleasure to read this concise account of the clinical neurophysiology of paediatric neuromuscular disease. The authors are adult neurologists with an interest in this subject. It is a readable book, with some poignant comments included in the "Gestalt impression" of motor unit recruitment in infants. Variability in the ease of diagnosis is reflected upon, contrasting the difficulties encountered in the diagnosis of infantile SMA, for example, with neonatal myopathic processes. The reader is also reminded about prognostic implications.

There are nine chapters, all of which emphasise important clinical correlations, including an initial description of paediatric electromyography, an approach to the floppy infant, and investigations on the critical care unit. There are several illustrative case reports and multiple original references. I suspect this book will find itself on the shelves of many clinical neurophysiologists and those neurologists and paediatricians who are involved with these investigations.

SIMON BONIFACE


This volume contains the conference proceedings of the Xth Meeting of the European Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (Antalya, 1994), and has been published previously as a supplement to Acta Neurochirurgica. The book can be divided into several broad headings. It begins with a series of papers on various aspects of movement disorders. A review of the pioneering work of the late Ted Hitchcock into neural transplantation is followed by articles on pallidotomy, and the place for thalamotomy in the management of disabling tremor in multiple sclerosis. A brief consideration of spasticity is then followed by the experiences of several units with image-guided frameless stereotaxis. The book then covers a diverse group of topics including the endoscopic treatment of cystic brain lesions, neurosurgery for affective disorders, and the localisation of epileptic foci. The final section on the management of pain discusses CT-guided percutaneous cordotomy and trigeminal tractotomy, several papers evaluating the role of spinal cord stimulators in the management of back and lower limb pain, concluding with consideration of some aspects of trigeminal neuralgia and central neuropathic pain.

It is inevitable with books of this kind that both the subject matter and the quality of the contributions is diverse. Whilst a number of the individual contributions are excellent, they are too short to contain anything more than a brief outline of the literature, making this very much a book for the expert rather than for those wishing to gain a broad understanding of the subject. Unfortunately there is no discussion or editorial comment after any of the papers, and the index is poor. I think that it is likely that clinicians will choose to read only selected papers from this text rather than to purchase the entire collection as a single volume.

ROBERT MACFARLANE


This is an excellent volume which should be in the library of most urologists interested in this subject. The book is split into six parts which cover basic anatomy, investigative techniques and a discussion of neurological diseases in adults and paediatrics. The last section is concerned with therapy.

The basics of neurological anatomy are well covered in part 1 and there is an additional section on sexual dysfunction and infertility which is not usually found in this sort of volume. Investigative techniques are well covered and in part 3 the common causes of damage to the controlling system of the bladder are discussed in sections so that spinal cord injury has a separate section from multiple sclerosis and cauda equina injuries. This leads to repetitive style inevitably as some conditions have similar precipitating causes. The children's section covers the common causes of neuropathy in children and has a useful section on enuresis. Part 5 covered urological disorders with neurologic implications so that prostatic hypertrophy and its sometimes devastating effects on the urinary tract is well covered. The section on treatment is up to date and comprehensive.

I think that the authors are to be congratulated on producing an interesting and well written book which in fairly short, succinct chapters, covers the basics of the subject very well. References are up to date and comprehensive.

PATRICK DOYLE


This book is written by three acknowledged American experts in the field, each with a different background. It sets out to provide a clinical approach to the patient with muscle disease and, to a significant extent, succeeds. The book begins in a fairly conventional manner with sections on various aspects of the structure and function of normal muscle, the evaluation of patients with myopathies, and genetic evaluation. The second part of the book deals with specific myopathic disorders, classified into the traditional subgroups. The third and final portion of the book describes general strategies of clinical management and includes a chapter on muscle pain and fatigue, including short sections on fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome. Generally, the information contained within the book is up to date and there are useful sections summarising recent advances in many of the chapters.

Who should read it? Is it not comprehensive enough to be a reference text but would provide ample information for any neurologist or non-specialist physician wishing to refresh their memory about a specific disease or clinical syndrome. It would serve as a good textbook containing all the information on muscle disease that would be needed by any trainee in neurology, clinical neurophysiology, rehabilitation medicine, or rheumatology. If any of the above describe your needs then I would recommend it.

TIMOTHY WALLS

SHORT NOTICES

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