Book Reviews

NEUROPATHOLOGY OF AIDS. 1990. Edited by Harry V. Vinters and Karl H. Anders. Published by CRC Press, Inc. 229 pages.

This book, written by two neuropathologists from Los Angeles, is based on their rather extensive experience with both biopsy and autopsy material from HIV- infected individuals.

The lesions thought to be due to the virus itself, those due to other infectious agents, and various miscellaneous findings of uncertain or unknown significance are dealt with.

The gross and microscopic descriptions are quite complete, and the book is profusely illustrated with photographs of generally excellent quality.

There is a very brief description of the biology of the virus and the mechanisms of tissue damage. There is also information on the techniques of handling infected tissues in a safe manner.

As a compendium of gross and microscopic features found in these cases, the book may be of value to pathologists. On the other hand, equally good descriptions of the various complicating infections and neoplastic conditions are readily available in other texts, and in this sense, much of the book is redundant; the most useful section will be the portions dealing with lesions due to the virus itself. The paucity of clinical information, and the absence of descriptions of findings in the body outside of the nervous system, will restrict the usefulness of this book to individuals interested in these aspects.

An irritating aspect of the book is in the manner the photographs are numbered and labelled; the legends appearing on one page may refer to photographs on the next two or three pages, making it necessay to flip back and forth between the legends and photographs. This could easily have been prevented by a more conventional editorial layout.

In summary, the book provides an excellent compendium of the gross and microscopic features in the nervous system of AIDS and its complications, and will be of interest to pathologists dealing with this material.

David M. Robertson,
Kingston, Ontario

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: TREATMENT AND LONG TERM MANAGEMENT. 1990. Edited by Jeffery L. Cummings and Bruce L. Miller. Published by Marcel Dekker Inc. 390 pages. $138 Cdn. approx.

This is volume 4 in a series entitled Neurological Disease and Therapy. The 25 chapters provide an overview of Dementia of Alzheimer's Type (D.A.T.). Clinical criteria including the current criteria for DSM III R and NINCDS-ADRDA for the diagnosis of definite and probable AD are noted.

Five chapters are devoted to the multiple neurotransmitter systems affected in DAT. Their association with cognitive and behavioural symptoms, however, remain unestablished. Therapautic attempts based on transmitter failure are outlined and summarized. However, treatment has been universally unsuccessful. The numerous behavioural symptoms are discussed, as well as various forms of therapy and their side effects.

Long term therapy including family directed therapy and the emotional support required by the care givers are dealt with in depth.

Perhaps more discussion of the ethics of treatment is needed.

This volume is well written and should be of value to practicing neurologists and those dealing with DAT.

M.E. Hill
Calgary, Alberta

INTRACRANIAL ANEURYSM SURGERY–TECHNIQUES. 1990. Edited by Duke S. Samson and H. Hunt Batjer. Published by Futura Publishing Co. 239 pages. $63 Cdn. approx.

There has been a plethora of aneurysm books in the past few years. This volume is a useful addition. It joins the books of Ito, Sugita, and that Ojemann and Crowell in being primarily a "How-to-do-it", technical manual. This monograph was written specifically to facilitate aneurysm operations for the practicing surgeon. Its focus, while deliberately narrow, has been clearly delineated and successfully achieved. The authors are both superb technical aneurysm surgeons and their thoughts on the selection and use of aneurysm clips, the principals of dissection, the treatment of intraoperative rupture and the use of temporary arterial occlusion are well reasoned and eminently practical. There are 16 chapters in this 239 page book. For the most part, aneurysms are grouped by their anatomical location. For each location the authors give their personal preferences for positioning, skin-bone exposure, initial exposure, dissection, clip application and "final thoughts". The illustrations are all black and white line drawings and are workman-like and clear. For the most part they are presented to give the "Surgeon's eye view".

This would be a very useful book for the beginning resident to purchase and even the experienced surgeon will gain a few "pearls" from the thoughts of these skilled neurosurgeons. Overall this is a lucid, thoughtful and easy to read book which is excellent value for the money.

Bryce Weir,
Edmonton, Alberta

STEROIDS IN DISEASES OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. 1989. Edited by Rudy Capildeo. Published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd. 306 pages. $78 Cdn. approx.

This text on the use of steroids in CNS disease is divided into six sections dealing with basic principles, tumors, trauma, pain, multiple sclerosis and other neurological disease. The basic science section is well done although other comments on biochemistry, side-effects and comparisons of the various steroid preparations would have been helpful. In the second and third sections on tumors and trauma, a large number of chapters are devoted to these topics. Often however, there is a jarring juxtaposition of a narrowly focused basic research chapter with empirical clinical data in the next chapter which does not lend continuity to the section. Much of the information presented is repeated in different chapters with the same studies cited but reaching different conclusions. There are two well written chapters in the trauma section that critique the literature and note no benefit of steroids. The other chapters suggest the doses of steroids used may not have been high enough, which in light of a recent publication (New England Journal Medicine 1990) may have been prescient.

The section on pain provides a review of anecdotal uses of steroids in various pain syndromes. In the multiple sclerosis section, the first chapter is the best, reviewing the history and uses of steroids in MS. One statement made by the author may not receive universal acceptance: "in general oral prednisone is not used as therapy in acute remitting MS". This section could have (and possibly should have) ended here as the subsequent chapters do not enhance the book. The editor contributes a chapter on high dose oral methylprednisolone (MP) (dissolved parenteral preparation!) that is non peer reviewed, a tactic repeated in the myasthenia gravis section. The final section deals with a number of other entities that may respond to steroids. The section on CIDPN is particularly poorly done with a comment about the proven lack of efficacy of steroids in Bell's palsy. The chapter on steroids in cerebrovascular disease calls for further high dose studies despite quoting a well conducted negative trial fitting their criteria. The entire text is sprinkled with calls for megadose MP in CNS diseases.

The book is unbalanced as many chapters could be eliminated due to redundancy or poor quality. Certain topics are only fleetingly discussed (cord compression by tumor) or not at all (infectious CNS diseases, sarcoid, lymphomatoid granulomatosis etc).

Certainly the use of steroids merits a small text but I feel this effort has fallen short of the mark. The text has a number of good chapters, is well referenced and reviews historical data of importance. Many neurologists will find the text useful from this viewpoint while maintaining an objective outlook on the non peer reviewed data presented.

Gordon Francis
Montreal, Quebec

ANTIEPILEPTIC DRUGS. 1989. Third Edition. Edited by Rene H. Levy, F.E. Dreifuss, Richard H. Mattson, Brian S. Meldrum and J. Kiffin Penry. Published by Raven Press. 1,053 pages. $149 Cdn. approx.

This is the third edition of the standard reference text on antiepileptic drugs. It contains no less than 72 chapters.

The first section consists of general principles; it is clear, authoritative, and valuable to the clinician and basic scientist alike.

The sections on the major antiepileptic drugs contain up to 8 chapters each, on the modes of action, chemistry, methods of determination, absorption distribution, excretion, biotransformation, interactions, clinical use and toxicity. Of particular value are the chapters on the various less commonly used benzodiazepines and other antiepileptic drugs. There are excellent chapters on the new antiepileptic drugs currently undergoing clinical trials.

In recent years we have witnessed a change from empirical utilization of drugs to better understanding of their pharmacokinetics and in particular, recognition of the fact that different seizure problems are likely to respond to different antiepileptic medications. This volume presents the available information clearly, concisely and authoritatively. It will serve as the standard reference work for the next decade. Then it will hopefully be updated and a fourth edition published.

Frederick Andermann
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NEUROLOGICAL COMPLICATIONS OF RENAL DISEASE. 1990. Edited by Charles F. Bolton and G. Bryan Young. Published by Butterworths. 256 pages. $73 Cdn. approx.

The authors of this review of Neurology and renal disease have a long interest in this area spanning the period during which many of the developments in management of renal disease have occurred. The book reflects this wealth of experience and the author's extensive knowledge of the subject. In the book's preface the authors state that they wish to make the text understandable to Nephrologists, Neurologists and other medical personnel interested in this area. The book does accomplish those tasks and in a single text provides a comprehensive review of the important neurologic complications of renal disease. An equivalent text with up-to-date discussions is not available.

The bulk of the text deals directly with specific clinical disorders and will be very relevant to specialists managing these disorders. Introductory chapters dealing with historical developments and basic mechanisms of uremia induced neurological dysfunction were both interesting and useful. A chapter on the basic methods of neurologic evaluation will be too rudimentary to be of use to Neurologists.

The book's most detailed sections do reflect the authors' areas of special interest. As an example there is a long discussion on the use of nerve conduction studies in following the progress of patients on dialysis. As the authors point out this is not a universal approach. A recommendation of yearly nerve conduction studies does not reflect common practice in all centers and would likely be resisted by many nephrologists who treat these patients.

Improvements in management in renal disease have reduced the frequency of some disorders discussed in the book quite dramatically. Nevertheless, the book's integration of new and old areas of interest makes the text highly relevant to current clinical practice. The book would be suitable both as a reference source for institutional libraries but also for those who encounter patients with neurologic complications of renal disease in their clinical practice. Students studying this topic would find the text extremely useful.

T.J. Benstead
Halifax, Nova Scotia

NEUROLOGY: A CONCISE CLINICAL TEXT. 1989. Edited by Michael Swash and Martin Schwartz. Published by Ballière Tindall. 400 pages. $39.50 Cdn. approx.

Several smaller British textbooks of neurology have appeared in recent years. Swash and Schwartz's *Neurology: A Concise Clinical Text* is on the whole as good as many of the others. However the justification for such texts, which are directed mainly at medical students and non-neurologists, must reside in some distinctive features such as a fresh organizational approach or an effective integration of basic neurosciences with clinical information. Although there is little which is original in this book, the authors have produced an introductory text which reads well, makes ample use of tables and original illustrations, is reasonably up-to-date and gives concise but balanced coverage to most areas of clinical neurology. One welcome and original touch is the inclusion of a "Historical Introduction" to neurology. Too many students, house officers and even neurologists today are unaware of the rich historical background from which modern neurology has evolved. The second chapter on "Symptoms and Signs" is well worth reading and contains a