

problems in elderly patients.

The scope is wide, including sleep disorders, thermoregulation, pain, depression, visual and hearing difficulties, the problems of family supporters and living wills. Those common but poorly understood neurological problems such as cramp, neck pain and incontinence are dealt with honestly. The chapter on how to interview patients is excellent, though the central importance of the telephone in history taking is overlooked. I would have liked more detail on the physical examination, especially on how to observe an older person standing, walking, turning and sitting—assessments often missing from medical case notes. The emphasis on foot problems and footwear is a welcome inclusion.

The book is liberally illustrated with MRI pictures. There are copious up-to-date references, from Europe as well as North America. The writing style is lucid and the many contributors give down-to-earth advice based on published data. In many cases, we have no facts to help direct our treatment; where there is ignorance or controversy, sensible guidelines are offered.

There are important gaps: agnosia and apraxia are overlooked and visual hallucinations are poorly covered. The elderly driver get only a few lines. There is relatively little on rehabilitation. I was surprised to find benzodiazepines being recommended as sedatives for old people.

But this book looks and feels good, reads well and gives an informed positive account of geriatric neurology. I will refer to it often and will urge my junior colleagues to do the same.

GRAHAM MULLEY

The Brain: A Neuroscience Primer 2nd Edition. By RICHARD F THOMPSON. 1993. (Pp 496 Illustrated; Price: £25.95 board, £18.95 paper). Oxford, WH Freeman & Co. Ltd. ISBN Board 0-7167-2338-7, Paper 0-7167-2485-5.

This book aims to introduce someone with no background knowledge or prior exposure to the field to the basics of neuroscience and the biological aspects of psychology.

It is set out in a logical way. After an introductory chapter giving an overview of the nervous system there are chapters on the neuron, membranes and potentials, synaptic transmission and neurotransmitters and hormones. These are followed by consideration at a higher level: chapters on the hypothalamus and biological imperatives, then sensory and motor systems. Chapters follow on development and plasticity of the brain, chapters on learning and memory and finally language and consciousness. This is accompanied by an excellent glossary and an appendix reassuringly entitled 'A tiny bit of chemistry, physics, and pharmacology'. Each chapter is followed by a clear concise summary and a series of suggested readings and references.

Dr Thompson's style is easy to read. He conveys difficult ideas in a straightforward way and manages to avoid frequent abbreviations which often muddy technical writing. In introducing a subject he sets the historical context by describing how discoveries were made, particularly, it seems, those that led to Nobel prizes. Classical experiments, such as Hodgkin and Huxley's work with

squid axon and Pavlov's work with conditioning, are described. The descriptions of the current state of knowledge that follows are also punctuated with references to interesting experiments. The reader is left in no doubt that this is an advancing science. There are frequent illustrations (well over 100) that complement the text, and a few excellent cartoons. This excellent book should be on the reading list of every pre-clinical neuroscience course.

GN FULLER

SHORT NOTICES

New Functional Aspects of the Suprachiasmatic Nucleus of the Hypothalamus. (International Symposium, Osaka, Japan, October 1991). Edited by H. NAKAGAWA, Y OOMURA AND K NAGAI. (Pp 264; Price: £330.00, US\$60). London: John Libbey & Co. Ltd. 1993. ISBN 0 86196 329 6.

Parkinson's Disease: Symposium Review 1992. Edited by MERTON SANDLER. (Pp 65; Price: £12.00, US\$24). London: John Libbey & Co. Ltd. 1993. ISBN 0 86196 404 7.

This volume comprises papers presented at the Morbus Parkinson Symposium, Maastricht, January 1992, and the Satellite Symposium "The existing role of dopamine agonists: the search for new strategies", Munich, June 1992.

A useful practical review of current treatment.

Teamwork in Neurology. (Therapy in Practice Series/40). By RUTH NEUWENHUIS. (Pp 198; Price: £13.95). 1993. London: Chapman & Hall. ISBN 0-412-39350-6.

The Neuropsychology of Attention (Series: Critical Issues in Neuropsychology). By RONALD A COHEN. (Pp 545; Price: \$90.00 H/bk). 1993. New York, Plenum Publishing Corp. ISBN 0-306-43953-0

Neurology Secrets. Edited by LOREN A ROLAK. (Pp 432; Price: \$36.95). 1993. Philadelphia, Hanley & Belfus Inc. ISBN 0-56053-056-1

Electrical and Magnetic Stimulation of the Brain and Spinal Cord (Advances in Neurology, Vol. 63). Edited by O DEVINSKY, A BERIC AND MICHAEL DOGALI (Pp 323; Price: \$139.00) 1993. New York, Raven Press. ISBN 0-7817-0066-3.

Anatomic Localization for Needle Electromyography. By STEVE R GEIRINGER (Pp 154 Illustrated; Price: \$28.95) 1994. Philadelphia, Hanley & Belfus Inc. ISBN 1 56053 068 5.

Neurosurgery for the Third Millennium (Series: Neurosurgical Topics/11). Edited by MICHAEL LJ APUZZO, AANS Publications Committee. (Pp 209 Illustrated; Price \$80 for AANS members, \$90 for non-members, \$70 for AANS residents). 1992 Park Ridge, Illinois. The American Association of Neurological Surgeons ISBN 1-879284-08-1

Neurosurgery—The Scientific Basis of Clinical Practice (2 vols). Edited by A CROCKARD, R HAYWARD AND JT HOFF. (Vol.1 pp. 1-512, Vol.2 pp. 513-994; Price £195-00). 1992. Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd ISBN 0-86542-186-2 (The Set) 0-86542-235-4 (Vol. 1) P-86542-236-2 (Vol. 2).

The Mental Status Examination in Neurology/Third Edition. By RL STRUB AND FW BLACK. (Pp 244; Price: £19.95). 1993 Philadelphia, FA Davis Co. UK Distrib: Waverley Europe Ltd, London. ISBN 0-8036-8212-3.

The 3rd edition of this useful source of information and references. It includes valuable standardised items compared to data from formal neuropsychological tests, and age-related data. There is a selective discussion of the methods and appraisal of cortical function.

Metabolic Brain Dysfunction in Systemic Disorders. Edited by AI ARIEFF AND RC GRIGGS. (Pp 477 Illustrated; Price £80-00). 1992. A Little, Brown Medical Title UK Distrib: Edinburgh. Churchill Livingstone ISBN 0-316-05067-9.

Spinal Dysraphism (Series: Contemporary Issues in Neurological Surgery). Edited by TS PARK (Pp 190 Illustrated; Price: £49.50). 1992. Oxford, Blackwell Scientific Publications ISBN 0-86542-105-6.

CORRECTIONS

Anderson, Milne. The motor disorder of multiple system atrophy. *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry* 1993;56:1239-42 (editorial). The dosage of dexamethasone should be 0.15 mg/kg body weight every six hours for four days.

A note on heterochromia iridis. *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry* 1993;57:231. This short article should have been attributed to Dr Patrick J Morrison, Northern Ireland Genetics Service, Belfast City Hospital, Belfast BT9 7AB, UK.