

possible ways of classifying the evoked potentials. It is better to know a few and to understand their hierarchy — to have a schema rather than a list.

One very frustrating aspect of this book is its scarcity of numbers. I agree that each laboratory should gather its own normative data. Nevertheless, these values must then be compared to those already in the literature. The means and the variances of the measurements in one laboratory should be the same as those in another, or at least explainably different. Unfortunately, the book does not provide the reader with sample data for comparison. Nowhere in the book is there any mention that the normal interpeak latency between waves I and V of the brainstem auditory evoked potential in an adult is 4 ms or that the upper limit of normal for this interval is 4.5 or 4.6 ms. The reader will also search in vain for information about the incidence of abnormal visual evoked potentials in multiple sclerosis or the relationship between height and latency in the somatosensory evoked potentials.

Another disconcerting factor is the author's unwillingness to judge the literature. He refers to many papers with the format "disease A has been reported to cause abnormalities in evoked potential Z" without providing the reader with any idea whether he considers the findings valid or important. This is unfortunate, since for any student an ounce of opinion is often worth a pound of information.

This book is worth buying as a reference book for the laboratory. I would not recommend it as a textbook for the neurology resident who seeks to learn about evoked potentials.

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BASIC HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY. 1984. By D.F. Lindsley and J.E. Holmes. Published by Elsevier, New York. XVI + 368 pages.

"Billy had unconsciously permitted his pony to drop into a lazy walk". So begins the final chapter of this splendid text. All the topics previously dealt with are quickly reviewed while describing the behaviour of a cowboy in an extract from an Edgar Rice Burroughs western. It is a moonlit night, "and Billy's eyes are dark adapted — the rhodopsin content of his rods is at its highest level. The dim illumination decreases the sensory input to the pretectal area neurons responsible for the light reflex . . .". Here, then, is an unusual medical text with weighty content presented in an entertaining and an often witty format. Few textbooks are written to amuse but this one frequently stimulated me to laughter. There are limericks and one-liners, "the limbic system is more a state of mind than an anatomical structure". The book evolved from class handouts used in teaching over the last 15 years. Clearly, the authors know what helps students to master this difficult material.

The overall plan of the book is conventional: elementary anatomy is presented first followed by considerations of the brain's environment. This is succeeded by chapters on the basic cellular physiology of nerve, synapses and muscle. Systems neurophysiology is covered by chapters on somatosensory and motor functions, the special senses, the consciousness, autonomic and limbic systems, and finally the cortical association areas. Each chapter begins with a list of objectives and concludes with a series of review questions for which answers

are provided. An extensive bibliography assists the motivated student to read further. Within each chapter, lists, summaries and tables are used extensively to reinforce important concepts or emphasize distinctions, for example, the sequence of events in excitation-contraction coupling. Frequent clinical examples are provided to introduce or illustrate physiological principles. The language of the text is refreshingly simple and straightforward. Clinical jargon is minimized but essential clinical terms are carefully defined. The numerous diagrams are helpful and most have been specially drawn or adapted from more complex illustrations in other sources.

This text is "basic" in both approach and level. It does not match the complexity of, say, Kandel and Schwartz's "Principles of Neural Science", nor does it provide sufficient clinical information to satisfy the M.D. curriculum requirements in neurology. In spite of these limitations, I recommend it highly to medical students as a stimulating and readable introduction to the neurosciences. It will be particularly valuable to those whose pre-medical education was not in the traditional basic sciences. I also recommend it to all involved in teaching medical students. This remarkable book provides us with a model for enlivening our own teaching.

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RECENT ADVANCES IN EPILEPSY. Volume 2. By T.A. Pedley and B.S. Meldrum. Published by Academic Press Canada. 344 pages. \$73.00 Cdn.

This second volume of Recent Advances in Epilepsy reviews a wide range of basic and clinically relevant topics related to epilepsy.

The reviews are concise and the contributions are of even quality. Some interesting, relatively new topics are included such as cognitive effects of antiepileptic drugs. Helpful chapters on recent advances with benzodiazepines, therapeutic monitoring of antiepileptic drugs, and neonatal seizures also appear.

The volume is a virtual "must" for the epileptologist. The general neurologist would also find this valuable if his practise includes several epileptic patients. Pediatricians and internists may also find it useful. The basic scientist as well as the epileptologist will find the reviews of cellular mechanisms of focal epileptogenesis and cerebral energy metabolism and seizures comprehensive and useful.

The book is well edited and can be thoroughly recommended.

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GENETICS AND NEUROLOGY. By Sarah Bunday. Published by Churchill Livingstone, 1985. 340 pages. \$70.00 Cdn.

The objective of this book, as stated in the Preface, is "to provide practical information regarding clinical delineation of different entities, their genetic mechanisms, and the recurrence risks for genetic counselling". It is assumed that readers of the book will have a basic knowledge of genetics. The author chose not to cover amino-acid disorders, organic acid disorders, multiple malformation syndromes, psychiatry (apart from dementia), and mental deficiency.

The book contains three very informative appendices covering (1) the frequency of consanguineous matings among parents

of patients with autosomal recessive disorders, (2) the calculation of carrier risks for X-linked disorders, and (3) a listing of X-linked neurological disorders. An additional appendix listing ethnic groups and disorders most often associated with them would have also been useful.

Each disorder is described briefly in terms of clinical signs and symptoms, genetics, and prenatal diagnosis. In several instances, a more critical assessment of the presented information would have been helpful. In addition, it would have been useful to discuss the accuracy of prenatal diagnosis for various disorders, rather than just stating that prenatal diagnosis is available. In addition, it should be mentioned whether prenatal diagnosis for a given condition is routinely offered at all major centres; or is only available in locations where specialized techniques are being investigated.

Detailed references are presented at the end of each chapter and these are separated according to topic. This is an excellent format as the reader can refer to a subject rather than an alphabetical listing of authors. Two criticisms regarding the references are that abstracts were not always identified as such and some of the references cited are not the major ones for the topic under discussion.

Each chapter has several excellent tables listing disorders, distinctive features, and mode(s) of inheritance. These are useful for quick reference.

A comment must be made about the author's terminology. It would be preferable to avoid terms such as "idiot" when referring to microcephalics and "mongol" in reference to individuals with Down syndrome or Trisomy 21.

No comment can be made on the price of this book as cost information was not available for this review.

In conclusion, this book provides a brief, although not very critical, overview of a wide range of topics. It is useful as a fast reference but, for most topics, additional literature should also be consulted if a reader wants to thoroughly cover a particular topic prior to seeing a patient. The excellent reference format will help a reader select appropriate extra reading.

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NEUROLOGY FOR THE HOUSE OFFICER. Third edition. By Howard L. Weiner, M.D. and Lawrence P. Levitt, M.D. Published by Williams & Wilkins. 204 pages. \$15.00 Cdn. approx.

Neurology for the House Officer, now published in its third edition, remains a very handy pocket sized guide for medical students. The first four chapters constitute a brief guide to anatomical localization of neurologic problems. This is followed by a series of chapters that document the common neurological problems seen in current hospital practice. There are then some chapters on the neurology of common medical problems, and the book finishes with some guidelines for neurodiagnostic procedures and neuroanatomy.

A significant omission remains the absence of any chapters dealing with infections of the central nervous system.

I would have no hesitation in recommending this book for medical students and first year medical interns who are unfamiliar with common neurological problems.

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Books Received

ADVANCES IN NEUROLOGY, VOLUME 43, MYOCLONUS. Edited by Stanley Fahn, C. David Marsden, Melvin Van Woert. 750 pages. \$172 Cdn. approx.

BEHAVIORAL NEUROLOGY: A PRACTICAL APPROACH. By Howard S. Kirshner. Published by Churchill-Livingstone (Academic Press) 230 pages.

BRAIN INSULTS IN INFANTS AND CHILDREN. Edited by Hector E. James, Nick G. Anas, Ronald M. Perkin. Published by Grune & Stratton (Academic Press). 291 pages. \$70.75 Cdn.

CLINICAL NEUROPSYCHIATRY. By Jeffrey L. Cummings. Published by Grune & Stratton (Academic Press) 264 pages. \$64.75 Cdn.

DIAGNOSTIC DECISIONS IN NEUROLOGY. By Klaus Poeck. Published by Springer-Verlag. 168 pages. \$23 Cdn. approx.

FUNDAMENTALS OF NEUROPHYSIOLOGY. Edited by R.F. Schmidt. Published by Springer-Verlag New York Inc. 346 pages. \$27 Cdn. approx.

LEFT SIDE, RIGHT SIDE: A REVIEW OF LATERALITY RESEARCH. By Alan Beaton. Published by Yale University Press. 364 pages. \$31 Cdn. approx.

MEMORY SYSTEMS OF THE BRAIN. 1985. Edited by Norman M. Weinberger, James L. McGaugh and Gary Lynch. Published by the Guilford Press. 514 pages. \$83 Cdn. approx.

MORPHOGENESIS OF THE BRAIN IN STAGED RHESUS MONKEY EMBRYOS. Series: Advances in Anatomy Embryology and Cell Biology 91. By Agnes A.M. Gribnau and Leonardus G.M. Geijsberts. Published by Springer-Verlag. 69 pages. \$27 Cdn. approx.

NEUROBIOLOGY OF ARACHNIDS. Edited by Friedrich G. Barth. Published by Springer-Verlag. 385 pages. \$96 Cdn. approx.