

Book Reviews

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Neurology: The Physician's Guide, ed by Robert G. Feldman, New York, Thieme-Stratton, 1984, 288 pp, price not given.

This volume focuses on common neurological problems encountered by primary care physicians. Each of the 16 sections is written by a different expert and presents a broad overview of the topic. While isolated criticisms can be made and omissions pointed out, it seems to this reviewer that, overall, the book does indeed serve a useful purpose as a primer on common neurological conditions. Thus, the generalist will find it useful, but it is doubtful that those who deal in the neurosciences full-time would find this text of sufficient depth to merit its purchase.

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The Diagnosis and Treatment of Epilepsy, by Richard Lechtenburg, New York, Macmillan, 1985, 239 pp, \$34.95.

This book presents the author's views concerning controversial areas of epilepsy. The writing style is clear and precise. The references are good and current. The strongest section is an in-depth discussion of psychosocial issues. *The Diagnosis and Treatment of Epilepsy* has several problems, however. Although electroencephalography (EEG) is the most important test for the diagnosis of epilepsy, it is presented superficially. Only six EEG illustrations are included; the majority have unlabeled montages. This type of information may not be required by the family physician, general surgeon, or internist, but would be required in detail by a neurologist. Many epileptologists and electroencephalographers would strongly disagree with statements such as: "Deciding that the child actually has benign focal epilepsy of childhood (rolandic epilepsy) is greatly influenced by the patient's clinical signs, and so the electroencephalogram is not very informative." The EEG is as important as the history and physical examination in this particular epileptic syndrome. In addition, the etiology of seizures, in particular, the metabolic causes, are also dealt with

superficially. A list of the more common entities would have been helpful and should have included hyponatremia, hypocalcemia, hypoglycemia, and the nonketotic hyperglycemia coma syndrome. Porphyrria, although rare, is not mentioned. The text also implies that the patient with alcohol withdrawal seizures requires chronic anticonvulsant treatment, but most neurologists would probably not agree with chronic treatment in this situation. Plus, most pediatricians would perform a lumbar puncture in a child with an initial febrile convulsion, but many would not routinely hospitalize the patient as suggested. The treatment section of the book presents several unconventional viewpoints. For example, the author states that carbamazepine and valproic acid probably are safe for pregnant epileptics; yet, several European studies have indicated an association between valproic acid treatment and neural tube defects. In Table 12-2, valproic acid is listed as a primary drug for rolandic epilepsy, but most epileptologists would probably choose carbamazepine, phenytoin, or even phenobarbital. Consequently, *The Diagnosis and Treatment of Epilepsy* would be of most value to the non-neurologist who has to deal with seizure disorders.

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Color Atlas of Microneurosurgery, by Wolfgang T. Koos and Robert F. Spetzler, New York, Thieme-Stratton, 1985, 420 pp, \$190.00.

Although there are many textbooks available demonstrating normal brain anatomy in the prepared specimen, to my knowledge, there has never been an atlas which demonstrates the abnormal findings that one encounters in microneurosurgery until now.

The color reproductions in *Color Atlas of Microneurosurgery* are excellent. The line drawings coincide with each of the operative photographs so that the normal/abnormal structures are clearly indicated. The atlas is also quite complete in that it presents photographs of normal brain anatomy which are also well labeled. There is not a great deal of text associ-

ated with the photographs, but the amount that is present is quite sufficient to give the reader a clear understanding of what is being demonstrated.

The preface of the book indicates that this is also a textbook for describing operative neurosurgery. There is a great deal of information concerning positioning of patients, but if there is any weakness with this work, it is the fact that there is not much description associated with each operative approach. Thus, one could conclude that this is auxiliary information for those in training and not necessarily a definitive description dealing with how to actually do an operative procedure.

Overall, the atlas is excellent and would be of great benefit to residents-in-training or those who have just recently finished their training. It is certainly a textbook that can be used as a reference source by the experienced practitioner.

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Current Topics in Thyroid Autoimmunity, ed by Deborah Doniach, Horst Schleusener, and Balthasar Weinheimer, New York, Thieme-Stratton, 1985, 222 pp, \$20.00

This book is based upon the proceedings of the 1983 Henning Symposium of Europe. The text provides an overview of trends in thyroid research currently being performed in Europe. The introduction, the summing up, and the future prospects of the field are discussed by Dr. Deborah Doniach, a pioneer in the field and an internationally recognized authority on thyroid autoimmunity.

Current Topics in Thyroid Autoimmunity is a compilation of 21 scientific papers contributing to the understanding of complex clinical diseases (i.e., Graves' thyrotoxicosis and autoimmune thyroiditis). One third of the papers deal with the technical aspects of the detection and measurement of various autoantibodies in Graves' disease. Areas of research concerned with the understanding of immunologic mechanisms in thyroid autoimmunity are also described. Not discussed are growth-inhibiting antibodies and their possible role in the development of primary myxedema without goiter.

Although the book contains a number of papers relating to autoimmune thyroid research, it has left out two important topics: the immunogenetics and the immunology of Graves' eye disease (exophthalmos). Also, it would have been of great help to readers if the related papers were divided into defined categories and were compiled next to each other in some kind of order. In spite of these shortcomings, *Current Topics in Thyroid Autoimmunity* should prove to be stimulating and informative to experimental endocri-

nologists, clinical endocrinologists, and clinical immunologists who are currently involved in various aspects of autoimmune thyroid research as well as to those who are interested in the science of autoimmunity in general. Most scientists in thyroid research will certainly find this book a helpful resource.

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Lecture Notes on Gastroenterology, by Elwyn Elias and Clifford Hawkins, Oxford, Blackwell Scientific, 1985, 383 pp, price not given.

This book is divided into three parts: "The Clinical Approach," "Investigations," and "Essential Background Information."

Part one is a concise explanation of the most common symptoms and signs of gastrointestinal diseases. Differential diagnosis is limited to the usual entities seen in clinical practice and omits some of the less common conditions. The interpretation of symptoms is practical and generally lucid. However, there are some inaccuracies, such as the statement that heartburn is due to esophagitis from hiatus hernia and the listing of hiatal hernia as one of the three most common causes of dysphagia.

The second part deals with common laboratory and radiologic studies of the gastrointestinal tract. This chapter is useful for the medical student assigned to a gastrointestinal hospital ward. An example of the content is the discussion of leukocytosis which occurs with bacterial infections, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, alcoholic hepatitis, and high-dose corticosteroids. In this era of complicated technology, this section will be especially valuable for the student. The text is clear and the illustrations are well reproduced. Guidelines regarding preferential use of endoscopy over radiographic studies are included.

The third part represents two-thirds of the book. It deals with clinical manifestations of gastrointestinal diseases, diagnosis, and treatment. It is accurate, well updated, generally concise, and easy to read. Recent advances in therapeutic endoscopy, medical dissolution of gallstones, and serologic diagnosis of viral hepatitis are described. Unfortunately, some important entities are discussed too superficially. The role of the lower esophageal sphincter in the pathogenesis of reflux and the fact that most hiatal hernias are asymptomatic are only briefly noted. The complications of acute pancreatitis and their management are omitted. Other sections dealing with chronic abdominal pain, peptic ulcer disease, chronic liver disease, and inflammatory bowel disease are well covered.

Overall, *Lecture Notes on Gastroenterology* is a summary for the medical student. The book is well balanced and easy to read. The material is updated, the