



Book Reviews

Aging with Spinal Cord Injury

Edited by Gale G Whiteneck

Demos Vermande, New York, USA. 1993. 384pp. ISBN 0 939957-48-5. Price \$94.95

The long term outcome of severe trauma and the associated issue of the effects of aging on chronic disability are of immense importance in modern society. This book, which, according to its preface, had a long gestation is a very worthy contribution to our knowledge of aging in relation to spinal cord injury. Aimed at both the person with spinal cord injury and the professional involved in service provision or planning, it warrants reading by both and will not disappoint. The structure is logical and the approach holistic, with the 30 chapters divided into seven sections. Useful well-referenced reviews of the physiological effects of aging on the major systems of the body constitute one section while others give the research, psychosocial and societal perspectives. Appropriate attention is paid to the survivor's views and to the planning of services. In contrast to texts comprised of conference proceedings, this is a balanced account which will be a useful resource to researchers in sociology as well as in health related studies. The type face is readable, the line diagrams clear and the references current. The index could perhaps have been a little more comprehensive. There are no glossy illustrations and the paper is of the less expensive type but the lack of these frills is reflected in its affordable cost. This thoroughly useful book represents outstanding value, is a credit to its authors and is highly recommended. As the years age its contents, one hopes there will be new editions.

Dr Brian Pentland
Head,

*University of Edinburgh
Rehabilitation Studies Unit
Astley Ainslie Hospital
Edinburgh, UK*

Electric Pain control

Edited by J.L. Jenker

Pubs. Springer Verlag, Wien, New York 1995: 223 pages: US\$ 49.00: ISBN 3-211-82622-X

The author of this monograph was formerly head of the Neurosurgery and Pain Clinic in Vienna. He is a distinguished worker in the field of pain and this monograph represents his views about pain as well as practical procedures.

This book comes in two sections. The *general section* deals with neurophysiological background, theories of pain, evaluation of pain and the Pain Clinic. The first section is the least satisfactory part of the book. Theories of pain, for example, are dealt with in a very sketchy way and as much space is given to "pain and weather" as to the evaluation of pain and to theories of pain.

The *special section* is much larger and deals with the practical applications of positioning of electrodes and sizes of electrodes in order to block specific nerves. Each

chapter in this section deals with a specific nerve or group of nerves and starts with the anatomy, and then deals with the positions and sizes of electrodes and the indications for use.

As a practical manual for one aspect of pain control the special section is extremely valuable. However, the English is idiosyncratic to say the least.

The book is primarily directed at specialists in pain management but the second section in particular would be an extremely useful manual in any physiotherapy department which deals with pain because of the very clear practical instructions.

It is a soft back book with good illustrations and is reasonably priced.

Dr. L.S. Illis
Assistant Editor

Mercer's Orthopaedic Surgery

Edited by RB Duthie and G Bentley

Publishers: Arnold, London. 1996: 9th Edition: 1366 pages: Price: £135: ISBN 0 340 55163 1

The 9th Edition of this important textbook is most welcome. The tremendous developments and the expanding interests in the speciality are highlighted by the excellent revisions and updating of the text. Indeed, appreciating that the first edition appeared over 60 years ago, the changes in the contents are remarkable.

The scope of orthopaedic surgery is discussed and is noted. The term 'orthopaedic' is derived from the Greek word 'ortho' meaning straight, and 'paeda' a child. Thus, from the Oxford Dictionary 'the curving or correcting deformities in children' but the modern specialty of orthopaedics has dramatically changed and now, as the authors say, encompasses affections of bones, joints, muscles and tendons and other soft tissues, of congenital and static deformities and also of affections of the nervous system. Thus, a broad comprehensive training in the specialty is required and this multi-authored textbook is recommended for both undergraduates and postgraduates. No 'neural specialists' such as neurosurgeon, neuroradiologist or neuropathologist are among the authors and there is little in the book concerning the orthopaedic surgical approach to patients with a traumatic spinal injury. A brief mention of 'paraplegia' (spinal paralysis) is given.

Could the next edition of this important textbook please provide more information on the problems and the management of the paralysed upper limb resulting from a high spinal cord lesion? There is mention, in the section on brachial plexus injuries, of indications for tendon transfers etc, and certainly the expertise of orthopaedic surgeons for people with 'myelopathic upper limb paralysis' would be greatly appreciated.

There is little on fractures of bones but a full and useful section on lumbar and lumbosacral intervertebral disc lesions is provided. It is likely that not all surgeons would wish to treat even 'selected patients with such a pathology by chemonucleolysis'. Do many orthopaedic surgeons operate on patients who have an intramedullary neoplasm?

The section on spinal biomechanics and that on the post-poliomyelitis syndrome are invaluable.

This handsomely published textbook is a great favourite amongst orthopaedic surgeons and is highly recommended.

Phillip Harris

Neurology & Trauma

Edited by Randolph W. Evans

1996. 688 pp. £70. ISBN 0 7216 4352 3.

Trauma involving the nervous system is often badly taught, yet in practice medical litigation is common and becoming increasingly more of a problem, both in frequency and complexity. Many problems of trauma involve controversial areas of neurology and neurosurgery. This book is a welcome addition to the literature. The editor (a neurologist) has done a superb job in producing a collection of articles from some 54 authors, mostly from North America. There are seven sections: head trauma, spinal trauma, plexus and peripheral nerve injuries, post-traumatic pain syndromes, environmental trauma, post-traumatic sequelae and medico-legal aspects. The 39 chapters of this book include some first class critical reviews of problems which frequently occur both in the

clinical context and in the context of medical litigation. For example, there are excellent discussions on the post-concussion syndrome and the sequelae of mild head injury, post-traumatic epilepsy, whiplash injuries and reflex sympathetic dystrophy to name but a few. Rehabilitation of the injured patient is not neglected and there are chapters on cognitive rehabilitation, rehabilitation of the complications of spinal cord and so on. In addition there are some unusual and extremely worthwhile studies such as the medical complications of head injury, psychiatric aspects of the neurology of trauma, does trauma cause or worsen amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or multiple sclerosis? These are but a few of the subjects which are covered in this excellent book.

The book is well illustrated and well referenced. I doubt if there is another publication which contains so much information relevant to neurological trauma.

The book should be in every medical library and is invaluable for any practitioner who deals with trauma, both in the clinical and the medico-legal setting.

Dr LS Illis
*Wessex Nuffield Hospital
Winchester Road
Chandlers Ford
Hampshire, England*