



Book Reviews

Spinal Cord Diseases: Basic Science, Diagnosis, and Management

Edited by E Critchley and A Eisen

Springer Verlag (London), 1997. 624 pp. £99

ISBN 3-540-19935-7

This book is the updated and revised version of the 1992 edition. It comprises thirty chapters on the different aspects of spinal cord diseases and consequences of trauma. Thirty contributors would appear to be rather a large number of authors and would explain the unevenness in the quality of certain chapters. I was particularly disappointed by the chapters on spasticity; and the paucity concerning the problem of orthostatic hypotension and its treatment as compared with the contribution on Autonomic Dysreflexia (one should really use the term 'Autonomic Hyperreflexia' versus that of 'A. Hyporeflexia'). The chapter on 'Trauma and Paraplegia', although well illustrated, would have been better situated in an orthopaedic surgery book. More should have been said about conservative management and its techniques, especially in the light of recent publications on the subject. Apart from these mild criticisms the book overall is comprehensive and in my opinion is a good reference manual for medical graduates and undergraduates. There are many relevant references related to each chapter, but there are very few related to 'Spinal Cord', (previously called 'Paraplegia') which is the journal of The International Medical Society of Paraplegia, where many good and scientifically valuable articles have been published on a wide range of subjects throughout the years. These should have really been mentioned. The X-ray, CT scan, and MRI reproductions are, overall, of good quality. Diagrams are explicit except for one which is of very poor quality. The book is fairly easy to read, apart from the fact that I have the impression that it has, probably for technical reasons, been somewhat 'reduced' in size. It is well made and bound. The price might be considered by some as rather high, but I would still recommend it to all who have an interest in the subject, as it shows that non-traumatic pathology of the spinal cord is a very vast subject indeed.

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Multiple Sclerosis: Advances in clinical trial design, treatment and future perspectives

Edited D.E. Goodkin and R.A. Rudick

Springer Verlag (London), 1996. 364 pp. £80.

ISBN 3-540-76018-0.

Hardly can a book be more timely than this. Multiple sclerosis has entered the era of disease-modifying therapy and yet the evidence supporting this statement remains controversial. Doctors Goodkin and Rudick have assembled an impressive array of contributors of international repute, to address key issues of emergent therapies. The text covers all relevant areas from pathogenesis and its relationship to therapeutic strategies to the role of M.R. imaging in isolated syndromes. The rationale behind specific drug approaches is

well discussed, as well as the strengths and weakness of clinical outcome measures, quality of life assessment and neuro-psychological assessment. Of particular interest were the chapters on statistical and design considerations for trials as well as that on the ethical considerations raised by such ventures. The second half of the book deals with the results of phase III studies with the Interferons, Co-polymer 1, Methytrexate and Cladribine. The book ends with an excellent summary by Professor Ian McDonald of the historical perspectives of multiple sclerosis as a treatable condition.

At £80, this book is reasonably priced and provides not just for those interested in multiple sclerosis, but for others involved in randomised controlled trials and critical assessment of therapy in disease, an invaluable reference work.

Neurology faces many exciting challenges not least the interpretation and translation of therapeutic trials into clinical practise. This welcome text is to be applauded, it is stimulating authoritative and hopefully will act as a model for other similar such works in different therapeutic advancement.

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Walking and standing aids

Foreword by Pennie Roberts

The Disability Information Trust, Oxford, 1997.

1st Edition 104 pp. £9 (UK) £11 (Overseas)

ISBN 1 873773 13 7

Rehabilitation texts, whether of a general nature or focused on a specific disorder or disability, tend to provide only a few illustrative examples of walking and standing aids. The student or experienced health professional wishing to learn about or update their knowledge of such aids will find this book invaluable. Individuals with walking disabilities and their carers will also find it a user-friendly guide to what is available and where to find more information. Perhaps of even greater importance is the guidance provided on how to choose an appropriate walking or standing aid with appropriate attention to safety issues. Printed on quality paper with readable typeface, handy bullet points and excellent illustrations, it is pleasing to browse through and the contents and index make it equally easy to quickly locate a specific item. It represents excellent value for money. One has no hesitation in recommending it to the target readership of therapists, carers and disabled people. I for one intend to familiarise myself with the other books in this series.

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