phia jury awarded nearly one million US dollars to a woman who complained that a computer tomography scan destroyed her psychic powers!

This text of 253 pages is an interesting precis of recent advances in our speciality. It makes easy reading, and should be on the bookshelf of all ENT departments.

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Spinal Cord Dysfunction: Assessment, edited by L.S. Illis. Pp. xiii + 303. Oxford Medical Publications, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988. £40.00.

This book, edited by L.S. Illis, is the work of a workshop into basic research into spinal cord injury. It is written by specialists in neurology, neurophysiology and spinal injury and neuropathology. It should be stated at the outset that it is not a book that teaches you how to treat spinal injury patients, it is a textbook for the advanced student to show the advances that are taking place.

Some of the chapters have been written by people actively engaged in research and there is a very stimulating chapter by Fehlings and Tator explaining how traumatic injuries can be produced as an experimental model in animals. There is an excellent chapter by P.L. Cook on the radiology of the spine; this is a long chapter and it is quite clear that he has a detailed practical knowledge of the problems and how they can be surmounted in studying spinal cord injuries. There is a very good review chapter by Cole on the subject of the autonomic nervous system. The chapter by Massey is rather theoretical and it is quite clear that he has not dealt with spinal cord injuries as he deals with the bladder as though it were a neurophysiological preparation. There are excellent chapters by Swash, Dimitrijevic, Rothwell and Woolf.

This book should be on the shelf of the postgraduate library for reference by anyone who is a student of spinal cord injury.

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Stroke, Derick T. Wade. Pp. xi + 98. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1988. £4.50.

I was concerned when I first saw this book that it was written by a neurologist and most of the care of patients with stroke is carried out by GPs and geriatricians. My suspicions were further aroused when I saw on the back cover that it 'tells the GP all he needs to know when confronted by a stroke patient' – visions of blackboards and short trousers. My suspicions were rapidly allayed on opening the book. The author deals clearly, concisely and completely with the philosophy of management and epidemiology of stroke. This is followed by

chapters on diagnosis, immediate management and more long-term problems. The book sensitively deals with physical and emotional problems experienced by the patient and family, who can help them, and how. Balanced advice is given about using fashionable methods of treatment of stroke. A chapter on prevention is included. Particularly welcome features are a check list of what to do for patients and their families at various specific times in the development of this problem and the list of sources of patient literature and support. I rarely find it difficult to find fault with a book but this book deals very fully with the physical, psychological and social aspects of this problem in a general practice setting. One's final impression on finishing the book is that if Dr Wade is that good a physician, it is a pity that he has to practise shut up inside a hospital. His book has a far wider application.

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Surgical Lasers, a Clinical Guide, edited by T.A. Fuller. Pp. xvi + 237, illustrated. Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1987. £68.

This book is beautifully presented and is a pleasure to read, the paper, printing and illustrations, many of them colour, being generally excellent. However, as in many multi-authored works, it suffers from loose editing and, as in many laser texts, its pages are scattered with oft quoted misconceptions that could easily mislead the reader.

The first chapter on fundamentals of laser surgery, written by the editor, is a useful introduction to this rapidly evolving technology. Subsequent chapters cover many surgical specialties in which lasers have been assessed but there is no chapter on (cardio)vascular surgery which is perhaps the most recent and in many ways the most exciting area of ophthalmology in which the place of lasers in routine management is best established. There is no mention of lithotripsy techniques.

The references, only one of which is post 1985, are generally extensive but citation is inconsistent. In some chapters they are incorporated in the text and infuriatingly, not in others. Enumeration of safety aspects, surely a vital topic, is confined to eight short paragraphs in the chapter on lasers in intra-abdominal gynaecological surgery and it is not indexed. There is no adequate discussion of the special anaesthetic requirements for laser surgery. The preface states three goals of the book. It will provide information and encourage participation, but it does not present a single volume source for practical clinical laser applications. Admire it and enjoy it, as I did, but you will have to look elsewhere to complete the picture.

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