Book Reviews

Handbook of Neurological Lists, edited by L.M. Brass and P.K. Stys. Pp. xv + 397, not illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, London, Melbourne, New York, Tokyo, Edinburgh, 1991. Paperback £22.00.

Reviewers, sent books which include the word 'List' in their title, either shudder and start writing letters complaining about declining standards in student learning methods, or they reach for their red pen and start adding things which they believe to be essential. The authors at least invite you to do the latter having presented the reader (or perhaps better called the browser, for this book, is not an easy read by any stretch of the imagination), with a series of daunting lists and instructions. It is easy, but not very productive, to start picking holes in lists, for example, in the section entitled *Differential Diagnosis*, placing Creutzfeldt Jacob Disease with Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis does little credit to recent advances in our understanding of prion diseases, and to group Meningeal Carcinomatosis with Paraneoplastic Disorders is surely inaccurate.

At the end of the day lists are merely lists and tell you nothing about diseases. The trouble with these lists is their order; they fail to guide the reader in terms of clinical likelihood. More useful would have been some grouping into what is common, less common and as rare as 'hens teeth'. Whilst references acknowledge the list's source; the book would have been more useful for the neurological trainee if each section was referenced to a discussion of the list content.

In this computerized age *Handbook of Neurological Lists* perhaps might have been suited for use on a PC and made available through public domain software at a more acceptable price.

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Tutorials in Clinical Surgery in General, F.G. Smiddy. Pp. xi + 311. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, Tokyo, 1991. Paperback £19.95.

The author has responded promptly to the changes in the syllabus associated with the Clinical Surgery-in-General Examination. The book does not attempt to provide the depth of knowledge necessary for this examination but provides an excellent framework for study and revision. The chapters on preoperative assessment and postoperative complications are particularly good but could perhaps have focused a little more on the implications of the increase in day case work. This book will prove a very valuable aid to study.

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Diagnostic Radiology: An Anglo American Textbook of Imaging, 3 Vols, edited by Ronald Grainger and David Allison. Pp. 2760, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, London, New York, Melbourne, Tokyo, Edinburgh, 1991. Hardback £295.00.

This is the second edition of a highly acclaimed radiological textbook combining the British and American expertise. The editors have succeeded in maintaining the excellent quality of the text and incorporating many of the new advances that have occurred since the first edition.

The book is aimed not only at radiologists in training, but also as a quick reference for the established radiologists and physicians. Much of the original format has been retained; the existing chapters are updated and 18 new chapters added. The first section starts with a chapter on departmental organization and digital radiology, and includes useful chapters on contrast media and the physics of the various imaging modalities. The subsequent 11 sections cover the various organs with emphasis on a multi-modality approach.

Interventional radiology is covered extensively; there are chapters at the end of each section dealing with procedures relating to the particular organs, as well as a separate section covering all aspects of interventional techniques.

Many of the chapters include tables and imaging algorithms to help the reader with the differential diagnosis and choice of imaging. The illustrations are uniformly good and the references are generally up to date with suggestions for further reading for those who want to expand on a particular subject. A useful glossary of the terms used in chest radiology is also included.

Criticisms are few and minor, and mainly reflect the editorial difficulties in maintaining uniformity in a text with contributions from over 100 authors; traumatic tear of the aortic arch, for example, features in three different chapters. There is perhaps too much emphasis on angiography whilst more CT examples could have been included; thin section CT of the thorax receives little attention and CT pelvimetry is not discussed.

Overall, this is an excellent textbook that is reasonably priced and should be available in every radiological department and general medical library.

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Vascular Anesthesia, edited by J.A. Kaplan. Pp. 700, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, New York, Melbourne, Tokyo, 1991. Hardback £65.00.

Early chapters describe the assessment of risk and the state of the vascular system. I wonder how many patients benefit from all the assessments and treatments described in the chapter on optimization. Maybe more will, if more anaesthetists and surgeons read this text. I like the introduction to each section, the scope of the problem is

described and followed by diagnostic techniques and treatment. Chapters on the coronary and the peripheral circulation follow. Anaesthesia, local and general, is discussed, also the pathophysiology, physiology and response to drugs. Chapters on pharmacological theory of ischaemic heart disease and a chapter on premedication for the vascular surgery patient. All the chapters are thorough. The chapter on premedication is a good example, it seems to include every aspect ranging from the diabetic patient to those requiring bronchodilator and anti-arrhythmic control.

I soon noticed the splendid reference lists and a quick flick forward of the pages confirms that the rest of the chapters are similarly endowed. The description of cardiovascular monitoring ranges from the Fick for cardiac output to echocardiography Doppler techniques, interpretation and application. Lessons from the Treadmill caught my eye, as did the Role of the R Wave.

Important subjects – anaesthesia for those with coronary artery disease undergoing non-cardiac surgery and the choice of anaesthesia are valuable, including about 300 references between them. The rest of the book details the anaesthetic considerations for different vascular operations, carotid artery surgery, thoracic and abdominal aneurysm resection, peripheral artery surgery, mesenteric ischaemia and sepsis, paediatric vascular surgery. There is an educational but interesting chapter on liver transplantation for the mystified. The kidneys, as one might expect, get a chapter, as do blood, pain, and postoperative cardiovascular complications.

This book ends on a sad note with 'the complications of vascular surgery'.

All in all, there are 659 pages of interest. It is very readable – has good clear diagrams and follows a clear plan. It contains good cardiovascular advice for the general anaesthetist, but I think that every vascular anaesthetist, surgeon and physician would find something very useful here.

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Rehabilitation of Early Rheumatoid Arthritis, Matthew H. Liang and Martha K. Logigian. Pp. xiv + 147. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, Toronto, London, 1992. Hardback £35.00.

This book is a refreshing change from the run of the mill rheumatology texts that tread the well-worn trail of symptoms, signs, investigations and treatment (and in that order, please, for that is the way medical students are taught to construct things). Such an approach is unhelpful, for to use such a text requires the diagnosis to be made first, and often the treatments listed are out of date by publication time. But it is also true that many texts throw in a holistic tailpiece as if to say 'treating the disease is what's important: but everyone goes on about how we should consider the patient as a whole, so here is a little bit on that – which you can call rehabilitation if you like – but we haven't a lot of time for this because T-cell subsets are much more interesting.'

Liang and Logigian's book spends just under two pages describing the manifestations of rheumatoid arthritis, and then attacks the things that matter to the patient – breaking the bad news of the diagnosis, assessing function, discussing the systemic features of the condition (there is a whole chapter on fatigue) and then looking in more detail at regional problems. It accepts subliminally that drug treatment is not very good and ignores this at the expense of physical and psychological management. Any rehabilitation specialist will immediately empathize with this approach, although it may be alien to the acute physician (or surgeon), and indeed the style of writing is descriptive, almost light; it is a book for reading, not dipping. It is the sort of book that should be a set book for students and trainees, to teach (or perhaps, being charitable, remind) them what the art of medicine is about – caring for people, not diseases.

It does, however, assume some knowledge; for instance, some examination techniques are simply described where they would be better drawn or photographed, and more illustrations would be helpful. It is also a pity, reviewed this side of the Atlantic, that the chapter on psychosocial aspects is entirely North American. Thus it must be compared with British rehabilitation texts (such as Goodwill) which perhaps have the edge. Nevertheless I recommend it strongly to all doctors for its style and philosophy; they say a picture is worth a thousand words, but a hundred from this book suffice. If you were not a thinking doctor when you begin it, you should be by the end.

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Clinical Pharmacology, seventh edition, D.R. Laurence and P.N. Bennet. Pp. 704, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Milan, New York, 1992. Paperback £27.50.

What can a reviewer say that is new and profound about one of the world's best known textbooks of clinical pharmacology that has now gone into its seventh edition? When Professor Laurence wrote his first edition in 1960, clinical pharmacology did not exist as a distinct clinical and scientific discipline, and there is no doubt that this book has been an important factor in its rapid international growth and development. Wherever one goes throughout the world, Laurence and Bennett is to be seen on private and institutional book shelves. Its success depends not only on its scientific and educational authority but on its attractiveness of style which clearly bears the stamp of its authors. Long may it continue!

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