

BOOK REVIEWS

The Temporal Lobes and the Limbic System.
Edited by M. Trimble and T. Bolwig,
Wrightson Biomedical Publishing Ltd,
Petersfield, 1992, pp. 288

It would be hard to praise this book too highly. The editors have assembled an ideal group of authors, with both a pure and clinical neuroscience background, to provide the most authoritative work on the limbic system to date. The blend of scientific and clinical is just right. Each of the eighteen chapters is valuable in its own right, but their combination acts as a powerful and effective impetus to advance the understanding in this area. From being the Cinderella of different brain areas in terms of understanding their function, the limbic system is now on a par with the rest of the brain. The book starts with a fascinating historical introduction by Paul McLean, who introduced the term limbic system 40 years ago and ends with a thought provoking philosophical conclusion by J. R. Smythies, completing a very balanced and readable volume.

D.G.C. Rogers

Diseases of the Spinal Cord. Edited by E. Critchley
and A. Eisen, Springer-Verlag, London, 1992, pp.
453

The enthusiastic reviewer cannot help being a little chastened to contemplate how large will be the number of readers filing hurriedly past this review. It is a long walk from the telencephalon to the myelencephalon and beyond, and few behavioural neurologists have time to peer with anything other than guilty recognition down through the foramen magnum to the murky depths below.

Spinal cord disorders are an excellent subject for an authoritative, comprehensive and up-to-date monograph, in the production of which Critchley and Eisen achieve a notable degree of success.

There is a slightly hesitant start—basic anatomy, and the physiology of pain and spasticity are well covered, but neurochemistry and pharmacology are not; embryology and development receive only two or three brief paragraphs; the organization is a little idiosyncratic, the latter chapter perching unhappily between neuropathology and imaging, while a short but helpful chapter on the hazards of lumbar puncture also sits uncomfortably between spasticity and pathology. These are, however, minor points. There is an excellent and comprehensive chapter on neuropathology; the two investigational chapters, on imaging and clinical neurophysiology, are equally auth-

oritative and instructive. The subsequent disease-orientated chapters are almost all of the first order; there are particularly good accounts of degenerative spine disorders, myelopathies, anterior horn cell diseases, spinal cord compression, and trauma; the editors have not ignored less fashionable topics, with helpful chapters on conus syndromes, non-disc-related radiculopathies, and vascular disease.

There are, of course, one or two minor criticisms. Whilst physical rehabilitative strategies for improving mobility are well covered, the investigation and management of bladder dysfunction receives little attention (I could find no reference to self-intermittent catheterization); the treatment of chronic spasticity is described with only the briefest of allusions to the increasingly important technique of intrathecal Baclofen infusion, and little or no space is found for the management of sexual problems in those with chronic spinal injury. I could find no mention of autonomic dysreflexia. Readers of this journal might be particularly disappointed by the absence of a section on psychosocial problems attending spinal cord injury. The chapter on tropical disorders might usefully have brought together accounts of HTLV-1-associated myelopathy, lathyrism, tetanus, konzo, and other disorders, many of which are well covered but elsewhere. Finally the book appears to have taken some two to three years in production—only a small handful of references postdate 1989, and statements such as “the thoracic and lumbar cord is almost impossible to image (by MRI)” —not, it must be said, quoted from the neuroimaging chapter—are inappropriate in a book dated 1992. The link between HTLV-1 and paraparesis is only hesitantly mentioned in the section on TSP (although more clearly described in a less conspicuous paragraph in the tropical myeloneuropathy section of “Myelopathies”). There is no mention of the links between stiff man syndrome and autoimmunity to glutamic acid decarboxylase, or between Kennedy syndrome and the androgen receptor. Finally, a forward-looking chapter on neural injury, repair, and regeneration, including recent advances in spinal cord glial and neuronal transplants, might have allowed the book to finish on a more upbeat and contemporary note.

Although this reads like rather a long list, the quality of the great majority of the chapters is very high. The book contains a wealth of objective information and, no less invaluable, of subjective experience; it is well produced to boot. For those true neurological polymaths still reading, Critchley and Eisen's *Diseases of the Spinal Cord* can be warmly recommended.

Neil Scolding



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