



STROKE UNITS: AN EVIDENCE BASED APPROACH*

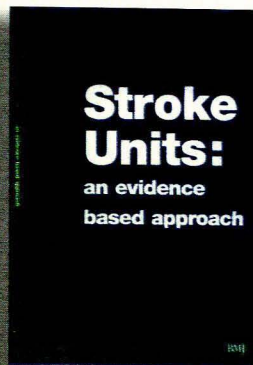
Edited by Peter Langhorne and Martin Dennis. Pp. xv + 112. £25. BMJ. 1998. ISBN 0-7279-1211-9.

This book examines the most effective way to provide care for stroke patients admitted to hospital. The central issue has been whether an improvement in the organisation of care of stroke patients can provide worthwhile benefits for patients who receive that care.

There is a long history of research examining whether organised stroke unit care within a hospital improves recovery of stroke patients. It involves a multidisciplinary group which develops co-ordinated policies and procedures which are executed within an integrated rehabilitation plan tailored to the individual problems and needs of the stroke patient. The authors provide a systematic review of all the relevant research studies which examine the question of whether stroke unit care improves patient outcomes compared with contemporary conventional care (e.g. in the general medical wards). Their approach includes collation and interpretation of information from a comprehensive search of the available evidence (with the support of the Cochrane Collaborative Stroke Review Group). The organisation of inpatient stroke unit models is also discussed.

In summary, the authors conclude that patients managed in stroke units were more likely to survive, regain independence and return home compared with those managed with conventional care. These benefits were not restricted to any subgroup of patients and were observed in several models of stroke unit care. The book contains chapters which describe the type of stroke units which are effective and the important components of practices within a stroke unit. Another chapter deals with the economic analysis of stroke unit care and argues strongly that stroke unit care reduced economic costs by freeing resources for alternative uses. The implications of planning a stroke service are discussed. The authors draw on practical experience, common sense as well as documented evidence to produce a more complete account of how to organise inpatient stroke care. This concise book of 100 pages is clearly written and will be of use to all those wishing to reorganise their inpatient stroke service.

Alan Bryer



NEUROMUSCULAR DISEASES DURING DEVELOPMENT

Edited by F Cornelio, G Lanzi and E Fedrizzi. Pp. 164. Illustrated. £36/US\$131. John Libbey & Company. 1997. ISBN 0-86196-5418.

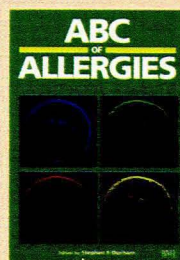
This is a compilation of contributions made at the seventh postgraduate course in paediatric neurology held in Italy in March 1995. Three main areas are concentrated on: the impact of molecular biology and molecular genetics on aetiology; advances in the understanding of the pathogenesis of neuromuscular disease; and therapy.

Each chapter begins with a summary highlighting the important aspects of the disorder being covered. This is followed by the discussion of the characteristics of the diseases, including genetics, biochemistry, pathophysiology, clinical findings and pathology.

The major childhood neuromuscular diseases are covered, viz. metabolic myopathies, respiratory chain defects, congenital muscular dystrophies, dystrophinopathies, myotonic syndromes, hereditary motor and sensory neuropathy, spinal muscular atrophy and disorders of neuromuscular transmission.

This book is well referenced. Controversial aspects are discussed with authorities offering differing viewpoints in the field, either supporting or opposing the theory being given. This allows the reader to realise that this is a rapidly advancing field where even the experts do not have all the answers.

BOOK MANAGER'S CHOICE



ABC of Allergies, edited by Stephen R Durham. Published by BMJ Books, R209.

A brand new addition to the BMJ's ABC series, shedding light on an area of medicine occupying increasing attention. *ABC of Allergies* is an accessible and comprehensive guide to the diagnosis and management of allergic diseases for non-specialists. It includes chapters on all the major allergies, including food allergy, allergy venom, anaphylaxis, asthma, and allergic diseases of the skin, as well as invaluable information on avoidance, drug treatment, and immunotherapy for allergies. As with the entire ABC series, it provides key information to GPs, nurses and other non-specialists.

* Book titles marked may be ordered directly from SA Medical Association Health and Medical Publishing Book Department, Private Bag X1, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126, e-mail publishing@samedical.org, jstrydom@samedical.co.za



The last few chapters deal with management of patients and their families. These chapters focus on orthopaedic treatment and rehabilitative techniques that allow the patient to have a better quality of life. There is a chapter on mechanical ventilation with discussion on which patients would benefit from this controversial mode of therapy.

The chapter on prenatal molecular diagnosis gives an exciting preview of diagnostic techniques that are currently experimental but that could soon be available to facilitate an early diagnosis.

This book will be extremely useful for doctors that are concerned with children with neuromuscular diseases. It provides a comprehensive update on the impact of molecular biology and genetics on the diagnosis and prevention of this group of diseases, with discussion which will be easily understood even by those with a limited knowledge of this rapidly advancing field. Altogether, I found this an extremely valuable book, which in spite of our poor exchange rate is good value for money.

L G Scher

NEW TRENDS IN CEREBRAL HEMODYNAMICS AND NEUROSONOLOGY*

Edited by Jürgen Klingelhöfer, Eva Bartels and E Bernd Ringelstein. Pp. xvii + 845. NLG500 /US\$287.50. Elsevier Science. 1997. ISBN 0-444-82631-9.

The field of neurosonology encompasses a large variety of ultrasound techniques to examine the nervous system and its supporting vasculature. This has been particularly valuable in the diagnosis of carotid and vertebrobasilar disease where 3- and even 4-dimensional ultrasound imaging has recently emerged. Intracranial cerebral haemodynamics can now be determined via transcranial Doppler (TCD) techniques yielding both clinical and research information in fields such as cerebral autoregulation testing, intra-operative monitoring, embolus detection and evoked flow changes during functional testing of brain activities.

This book reports a combined meeting of the 10th International Symposium on Cerebral Haemodynamics and the 1st meeting of the European Society of Neurosonology and Haemodynamics. A selection of articles from the congress and invited review articles give the reader a current overview of methods of assessing cerebral haemodynamics and the value of these techniques in the approach to solving neurological and cerebrovascular problems.

The contributors are well-known specialists in the cerebrovascular field. A concise and useful overview by

L R Caplan on ultrasound in cerebrovascular patients, M Hennerici's numerous contributions such as the long-term haemodynamic effects of internal carotid artery dissection, and an article by Andrew Nicolaides on asymptomatic carotid stenosis and the risk of stroke (the ACSRS study) make this a very practical and useful book for all doctors interested in stroke and its complications.

The book is divided into a number of sections dealing with subjects such as carotid and vertebral occlusive disease; TCD; detection of cerebral emboli; cerebral autoregulation testing and cerebral monitoring.

Despite the rather forbidding title there is a wide audience of readers for a book of this nature. Students, family doctors and general physicians may occasionally use it as a reference in a library but for radiologists, vascular surgeons, neurosurgeons and those neurologists interested in stroke it makes compelling reading.

The price of US\$287.50 for this hardback book (over R1 500 on the current exchange) is however expensive for such a super-specialised book.

Vivian Fritz

BOOKS RECEIVED

The receipt of these books is acknowledged, and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the sender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits. The SAMJ does not publish unsolicited reviews.

Autoimmune Liver Diseases.* Second edition. Edited by EL Krawitt, RH Wiesner and M Nishioka. Pp. xviii + 656. NLG495/US\$284.50. Elsevier Science BV. 1998. ISBN 0-444-82803-6.

Emergency Psychiatry and Mental Health Policy. An International Point of View.* Edited by M De Clercq, S Lamarre and H Vergouwen. Pp. xiv + 269. NLG235/US\$135. Elsevier Science BV. 1998. ISBN 0-444-50015-4.

Fertility and Reproductive Medicine.* Excerpta Medical International Congress Series 1183. Proceedings of the XVI World Congress on Fertility and Sterility, San Francisco, 4-9 October 1998. Edited by RD Kempers, J Cohen, AF Haney and JB Younger. Pp. xiii + 850. NLG525/US\$301.50. Elsevier Science BV. 1998. ISBN 0-444-50068-5.

IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention. Vol. 3 Vitamin A. Pp. ix + 261. US\$69. International Agency for Research on Cancer. 1998. ISBN 92-832-3003-5.

Boron.* Environmental Health Criteria No. 204. Pp. xviii + 201. SwFr42/US\$37.80. WHO. ISBN 92-4-157204-3.

Selected Chloroalkyl Ethers.* Environmental Health Criteria No. 201. Pp. xviii + 95. SwFr26/US\$23.40. WHO. ISBN 92-4-157201-9.