



BOOKS

NEUROLOGY AND MEDICINE

Ed by R A C Hughes and G D Perkin. Pp. xiv + 415. £45. 1999. BMJ. ISBN0-7279-1224-0.

The text contains chapters which systematically review diseases which affect both the nervous system and other systems, e.g. the kidney, skin, liver, gastro-intestinal, respiratory, cardiovascular, haematological and endocrine systems. The chapters include diseases which affect multiple systems, e.g. diabetes mellitus, Wilson's disease and vitamin deficiencies. From a different angle, the authors report how neurological conditions may affect other systems, e.g. stroke causing dysphagia. Thirdly, we see how primary non-neurological disorders may impact on the nervous system, e.g. hepatic failure causing encephalopathy.

Each chapter is authored by at least two international experts, and there is a strong British bias. The chapters are all well referenced.

No textbook of this nature can claim to be comprehensive. In this text, there is no section on the neurological effects of malignancy. Also lacking is a comprehensive review on AIDS and the nervous system, although there is mention of AIDS in the skin chapter. Minor irritations were the numerous typographical errors.

On a lighter note, the final paragraph in the book, in the section on the neurology of pregnancy, there is a reference to delusions of pregnancy in men, where the partners of pregnant women experience weight gain, nausea and toothache, a condition called Couvade syndrome.

The book appropriately emphasises the inseparable relationship between neurology and other specialities in general medicine. I would recommend it to general physicians, neurologists and trainees in these specialities.

Brian Kies

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF PAIN. TASK FORCE ON EPIDEMIOLOGY

Edited by Iain K Crombie, Peter R Croft, Steven J Linton, Linda LeResche and Michael Von Korff. Pp. xi + 321. US\$61. IASP. 1999. ISBN 0-931092-25-6.

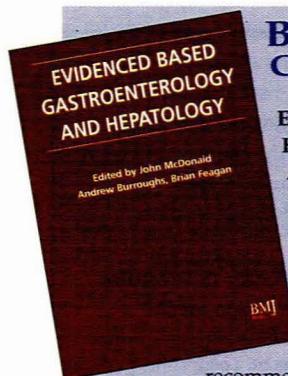
'Pain is one of the most challenging problems in medicine and biology. It is a challenge to the sufferer who must learn how to live with pain for which no therapy has been found. It is a challenge to the physician and other health care professionals who seeks every possible means to help the suffering patient. It is a challenge to the scientist who tries to understand the

biological mechanisms that can cause such terrible suffering. It is also a challenge to society, which must find the medical, scientific, and financial resources to relieve or prevent pain and suffering as much as possible' (Melzack R and Wall PD. *The Challenge of Pain*. London: Penguin, 1988).

Evidence-based medicine is the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients. It requires the integration of individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research (McQuay HJ, and Moore RA. *An Evidence-based Resource for Pain Relief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; 1: 1-3). There is a political pressure, both from those receiving care, and those who pay for it, to support treatment choices by health care professionals with high-quality medicine. Hence the need to assemble the current knowledge on the epidemiology of pain into one volume by means of systematic literature reviews of major quality studies.

Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of health states in populations (Lilienfeld AM, and Lilienfeld DE. *Foundations of Epidemiology*, 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Epidemiological research seeks to study pain populations as a dynamic process. It provides information critical to the understanding of the causes of disease, their natural history, and their impact upon societies. It allows us to identify where a disease occurs, and how it is transmitted from person to person. As pain is a multidimensional phenomenon, patients are difficult to identify and to track through time.

The aims of this multi-authored book are: to provide a repository of epidemiological information on chronic pain syndromes; to review the problems and pitfalls in



BOOK MANAGER'S CHOICE

Evidence Based Gastroenterology and Hepatology Edited by John McDonald, Andrew Burroughs and Brian Feagan, published by BMJ, Nov 1999, R845 (until 31 March 2000, thereafter (R1 105).

Evidence based medicine applied in the clinical context is the thrust of this important new book in gastroenterology and hepatology. It recommends best practice for treating the individual patient based on the randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews conducted in the major gastrointestinal and hepatobiliary subspecialties.

* Book titles marked may be ordered directly from SAMA Health and Medical Publishing Book Department, Private Bag XI, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126, e-mail publishing@samedical.org or jstrydom@samedical.org. Visit our website at www.samedical.org



epidemiological studies of pain, and to identify high-priority areas for future research. All major studies had to meet certain criteria (e.g. well-defined purpose, definition of the pain, appropriate study design, adequacy of sample size, appropriateness of the analysis, and validity of the interpretation of findings).

Epidemiological factors considered in this book include: psychological factors, gender, and cross-cultural factors. The epidemiology of chronic pain is reviewed in children, the elderly, and in the post-surgical situation. Central pains analysed include phantom limb pain and central post-stroke pain. The epidemiology of facial pain is extensively explored. This includes migraine and headache, oral and temporomandibular disorder pain, trigeminal and glossopharyngeal neuralgias, and chronic maxillary sinusitis. Finally the book explores the epidemiology of musculoskeletal pain (fibromyalgia, neck and shoulder pain, low back pain, and knee pain).

Epidemiology is one of the critical sciences basic to an understanding of disease and illness. Studies of the epidemiology of pain are a relatively new phenomenon with many studies flawed to the point that meaningful extrapolations to the population at large are unable to be made. The multi-author contributors to this volume have succeeded in examining the currently available literature in a critical and thorough manner by applying the highest criteria for distinguishing major, high-quality studies from others. This valuable book is the first to have systematically compiled a wealth of statistical information regarding the epidemiology of pain. It is up to students to grasp this and apply it appropriately in clinical practice.

E A Shipton

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 *Journal* does not publish unsolicited reviews.

Guidelines for Preparing Core Clinical-Safety Information on Drugs. Second edition. Including New Proposals for Investigator's Brochures. Report of CIOMS Working Groups III and V. Pp. 98. Sw.fr,15,/US\$13,50, CIOMS. 1999. ISBN 92-9036-070-4.

WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence. Thirty-first Report. Technical Report Series, No. 887. Pp. v + 23. Sw.fr.14.-/US\$12.60. WHO. 1999. ISBN 92-4-120887-2.

Laboratory Diagnosis of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. By E van Dyck, AZ Meheus & P Piot. Pp. x + 134. Illustrated. Sw.fr35.-US\$31.50. WHO. 1999. ISBN 92-4-154501-1.

LET'S TALK ABOUT LIFE: AN EDUCATIONAL BOOK TO END THE AIDS CRISIS

Collard, W. and Ncayiyana, DJ. Pp 242. R40. Illustrated. 1999 S A Medical Press. ISBN 0-620-24165-9

President Thabo Mbeki said at the opening of parliament that AIDS was a problem which needed urgent action, but there were other conditions such as tuberculosis which required just as much consideration.

In addition we need to focus attention on the sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), other infectious diseases such as malaria and hepatitis, and diseases of inappropriate lifestyle leading to cancer, heart disease and respiratory conditions. It was thus serendipitous that this book was sent to us for review as it examines, and educates in the prevention of, all of the abovementioned conditions, plus many others.

Collard and Ncayiyana have put together a book which is aimed at the high school learner, but it is written for those who have not had the advantage of the scientific culture to which many of us have been exposed. It is aimed at those who have no knowledge of bacteria and viruses, no knowledge of the effects of smoking or cholesterol on the tissues, and no knowledge of the deleterious consequences of sexual promiscuity. The book is designed to be used both as a classroom textbook and for home reading and reference. The information is in bite-size chunks which will put no strain on learner or teacher. Each chapter ends with a self-test quiz which is designed to make learners think.

The chapters are designed to form a pathway which leads from an explanation of AIDS and STDs, and circles around via sex education, microbiology, back to STDs and then on to the biological basis of lifestyle diseases. The book ends with two cautionary tales, one true story and one fiction, showing the dangers of drugs and promiscuity.

The language is plain and simple to understand, with technical terms explained at each step. The cartoon illustrations are naïve and slightly primitive, but carry no class or ethnic message. The biological and technical diagrams are clear and unambiguous, with little touches of humour.

The advice carried in this book is sensible without being judgemental or moralistic. The facts are presented and the readers invited to do what they will with the information. This is a book which should find wide acceptance in schools and should receive both moral and financial support from the State, business and in fact anyone who cares about the country.

As Dr Collard said in an interview, 'This book will show them how to save their own lives.'

Fred N Sanders