

Boekbesprekinge/Book Reviews

Management of low back pain

Management of Low Back Pain. Ed. by H. Carron and R. E. McLaughlin. Pp. xii + 246. Illustrated. £16,75. Boston: John Wright. 1982.

In a competitive market where books on backache are heading the best-seller lists, it is difficult to produce anything substantially different or new. This book does, however, achieve its stated objective by providing useful information on low back pain for the primary care physician. It is a multi-author book, and although individual sections are written by specialists in their field it remains intelligible and of practical value to the non-specialist.

The opening chapters define the ubiquity of the low back problem with extensive reference to statistics which, although of limited practical value, are of considerable general interest.

The description of the anatomy of the lumbosacral spine is most disappointing, being poorly phrased and technically inaccurate. Sections dealing with history, physical examination, differential diagnosis and ancillary diagnostic aids (eg. radiography, electromyographic studies and computed tomography (CT)) are well described. There is considerable emphasis on the psychological aspects of back pain, both in diagnosis and treatment.

The role of the back school and pain clinic are rightly stressed as useful and increasingly recognized adjuncts in the management of low back pain patients. A single, neurosurgically orientated chapter is devoted to the operative treatment of back pain with a useful albeit pessimistic description of various neural ablative and electrical stimulatory procedures for the management of intractable pain. The controversial issue of chymopapain chemonucleolysis in the treatment of acute disc herniations is discussed at some length with a counterproposal for the use of collagenase in a similar manner.

For the reader who feels trapped in the esoteria of sophisticated investigations and surgical techniques, the last chapter is a superb practical description of back care and as such probably the most important chapter in the book. Although a large amount of detail is covered, it is an attempt at placing facts (i.e. the place of myelo-

graphy, CT, surgery, etc.) in perspective rather than a comprehensive manual for the back specialist.

Some of the radiographic reproductions are of poor quality and detract from the overall effect of the book. It is nevertheless a readable book which should prove of considerable value to medical and paramedical students, family practitioners and postgraduate medical trainees (who will find the comprehensive list of references very useful).

G. du Toit

Obesity and leanness

Obesity and Leanness: Basic Aspects. By M. Stock and N. Rothwell. Pp. 98. Illustrated. £10,00. London: John Libbey. 1982.

The authors of this slim volume are well known for their research and interest in thermogenesis and brown fat metabolism. In this book they have tried to describe what makes some individuals of a species fat and others lean.

Although most of the material discussed is based on their work with experimental animals, they have shown that there are basic similarities between animal and human physiology. Their approach to the puzzling problem of the physiology of obesity has been well described in the chapters on energy balance, which includes work on the different types of thermogenesis. The role of brown fat is also discussed. They have included 2 chapters, the 1st being on the practical application of energy balance as a cause of obesity and leanness, the 2nd on associated clinical problems. This book is therefore not only of interest to physiologists and nutritionists but also to clinicians and is highly recommended to libraries as a reference for both undergraduates and postgraduates working in the field of obesity.

J. Waynik

Head and neck surgery

Head and Neck Surgery: Indications, Techniques, Pitfalls, vol. 3. Ed. by H. H. Naumann. Pp. xvi + 643. Illustrated. R143,95. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. 1982.

This book is the English translation of the 3rd volume of a series of German texts entitled *Head and Neck Surgery*, which were published in 1976 under the editorship of Professor H. H. Naumann of Munich. This one on the ear contains 12 chapters which cover surgery of the external, middle and inner ears, of the mastoid bone and its petrous apex, and of the intratemporal facial nerve. It also considers the important subtemporal region and related skull base, and also describes a number of intracranial procedures on the internal auditory meatus and on lesions close to the petrous temporal bone.

The techniques of some 80 different surgical operations are described in detail, and the purposes and principles of these, together with their indications and contraindications, the pre-operative assessment and preparation, and the special instrumentation necessary for each one are briefly discussed. Operative errors and dangers and postoperative complications and functional results are also briefly presented. In some instances, modifications and variations of these techniques are described, but in the main the text is singularly dogmatic, presenting the author's own approach, which, with stapedectomy for example, is open to criticism. Nearly a quarter of this book is devoted to neurosurgical procedures, and although some of these are of practical concern to the larger otological units, this section is of more interest to the neurosurgeon.

This is essentially a surgical manual, in which descriptions of each procedure are orderly and concisely presented. These are well supported by excellent yet simple line drawings, many of which are cleverly contrasted by use of colour. A considerable variety of otological surgery is covered in forthright manner.

This is an excellent book on surgical technique and a fine example of the high standards of otolaryngology practised in Germany. It offers an approach to textbook teaching that is unusual in English-language publications.

S. L. Sellars

Clinical nephrology

Manual of Clinical Nephrology. Ed. by D. P. Earle, F. del Greco, M. L. Levine and A. P. Saunders. Pp. xx + 585. Illustrated. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. 1982.

The title *Manual of Clinical Nephrology* raises high hopes of a book with an overall approach, perhaps highlighting important points in renal disease. An introductory section on history-taking is routine and trite in the extreme, with physical examination including an excessively detailed exposition on the taking of blood pressure. Failure to emphasize underlying physiopathology is a general fault and there is a lack of perspective in many sections. For example, diseases associated with the nephrotic syndrome are mentioned but the especial need to search for a cause in membranous nephropathy is not emphasized. It is baldly stated that 'non-specific prostatitis responds to prostatic massage and sitz baths', a very dubious statement referable to a very dubious entity.

The statement that the symptoms and signs of acute pyelonephritis usually subside within a few days even without therapy is not substantiated in practice. Chronic pyelonephritis is passed by with scarcely a mention of reflux nephropathy. After 30 pages on the management of fluid and electrolyte disorders, an assessment of urinary electrolytes appears briefly for the first time. An extraordinary statement that up to 25% of gouty individuals die in renal failure is followed by a later paragraph suggesting that a long-term study questions urate nephropathy as a clinical entity. No perspective is given to these two contrary statements. The hope of a book somewhere between the major reference volumes and the more formalized textbooks has clearly not materialized because of the many defects mentioned.

G. R. Keeton

Complications of paediatric surgery

Complications of Pediatric Surgery: Prevention and Management. By K. J. Welch. Pp. xiii + 468. Illustrated. R109,75. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. 1982.

This book outlines the complications which may occur in paediatric surgical conditions during operation and in the postoperative period. These complications may arise as a result of errors in diagnosis, operative technique, and management. Emphasis is placed on prevention by identifying the pitfalls in diagnosis and operative technique. The postoperative management of the various conditions is described, and the recognition and treatment of the possible postoperative complications are outlined.

Several excellent authors, authorities in their field, have contributed to this volume. The chapter on shock and resuscitation by Marc Rowe is excellent. The book is well and clearly illustrated and the production is of the usual high standard expected from W. B. Saunders. It is recommended for postgraduate surgical trainees and all surgeons who operate on children.

S. Cywes

Shoulder surgery

Shoulder Surgery. Ed. by I. Bayley and L. Kessel. Pp. xvi + 217 + index. Illustrated. DM 140,-. Berlin: Springer-Verlag. 1982.

This publication is a summary of the proceedings of an international conference on surgery of the shoulder. Contributors are the leading experts from Europe and the Americas on the management of shoulder disorders, perhaps with the exceptions of McNab and Rockwood, who did not attend.

The book explores the pathology of the common shoulder syndromes, and the numerous experts propose in logical fashion their preferred management of specific conditions. The long-term follow-up and evaluation of results of their treatment are particularly interesting and provide a good basis for orthopaedic surgeons who are involved in treatment of shoulder syndromes to compare their results with.

Despite the emphasis of the book, with its limited scope, on a subspecialty within orthopaedics there are nevertheless classic chapters on the more commonly presenting shoulder syndromes, which are eminently readable and would be of great interest to general practitioners and all who come into contact with 'problem shoulders'.

J. May

Open fractures and their complications

Management of Open Fractures and Their Complications (Saunders Monographs in Clinical Orthopaedics). 4th ed. By R. B. Gustilo. Pp. x + 211. Illustrated. R71,95. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. 1982.

This monograph deals in a logical and searching manner with the continuing orthopaedic challenge in the treatment of open fractures. The basic principles are soundly stated and the *pros* and *cons* of varying widespread methods of treatment are evaluated and analysed.

Contentious topics such as primary closure v. delayed closure and rigid fixation by internal or external means are compared in a scientific and unbiased manner.

The importance of adequate debridement and copious irrigation is emphasized repeatedly by the numerous contributors. The section on antibiotic therapy is comprehensive and the analysis of efficacy of various regimens is well discussed. A subsection on special problems is of particular interest and some novel and ingenious methods of immobilization are propounded.

This book will be of particular interest to orthopaedic surgeons involved in the treatment of open fractures and the basic principles outlined provide guidelines which should be of value to surgeons in training.

J. May