

## Books/Boeke

### Neurology

**Central Nervous System: Clinical Algorithms.** Ed. by BMJ. Pp. 45. Illustrated. £8. London: BMJ. 1989.

This book aims at assisting the general practitioner to solve neurological problems by providing short introductory essays on common disorders followed by algorithmic flow charts. Ten topics are considered, including epilepsy, syncope, headache and weakness.

Neurology is not a field that lends itself to such didactic approaches. I sympathise with the authors who have obviously been constrained by the format and have provided abbreviated cramped accounts with little discussion of controversies.

The algorithms, which comprise the majority of the book, are highly complicated and do not follow logical diagnostic plans. Under 'Weakness', for instance, a negative answer to the question

'Does weakness vary in severity' leads directly on to 'Any possibility of neurosyphilis'.

Among controversial points is the use of a 1962 classification of headaches which includes 'headache of nasal vasomotor reaction', and the assertion that 'embolism or transient ischaemia in the basilar distribution is the likely cause' of transient global amnesia. I was, however, pleased to see emphasised that isolated vertigo is not usually due to either transient cerebral ischaemia or cervical spondylosis.

The book has no preface and the affiliations of the multiple authors are not given. In summary, I cannot recommend this book to students, registrars or general practitioners.

Michael H. Silber

### Joint hypermobility

**Hypermobility of Joints.** 2nd ed. Ed. by Peter Beighton, Rodney Grahame, and Howard Bird. Pp. xvi + 182. Illustrated. DM198. Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag. 1989.

My personal interest in joint hypermobility started at an early age with my cousin, who was an 'acrobatic dancer'. I used to watch her smiling as her head emerged from the tangled knot composed of her limbs and torso, and wonder in my childish fashion 'How can she do that?' The same question was asked again when my daughter became a ballet dancer, although she was not quite as hypermobile as my cousin.

Hypermobility can of course be a curse as well as a blessing, and much of this quite fascinating book is taken up with describing the damage hypermobile joints can incur. Hypermobility is not a diagnosis that readily occurs to the unsuspecting physician, although as Professor E. G. L. Bywaters of the Royal Postgraduate Medical School points out in his foreword to the first edition of the book, even although there is no cure as such, an explanation to the patient why he is suffering from aches and pains can in itself be therapeutic. One of the most practical features of this book is

the nine-point hypermobility score which should easily enable those suffering from these conditions to be identified.

What is hypermobility? As the authors state in their preface, there is now almost universal agreement that joint hypermobility is but one feature common to a heterogeneous group of generalised hereditary connective tissue disorders, and there is convincing biochemical evidence pointing to defective collagen as the villain of the piece.

Even if readers have no great depth of knowledge about orthopaedics, they cannot fail to be intrigued by the chapter on the performing arts in which, in this edition, the number of references has increased from 10 in the first edition to 49 in this one.

Peter Beighton, Rodney Grahame and Howard Bird have produced a beautifully written and meticulously researched treatise, and are to be congratulated on their achievement. Highly recommended not only to specialists, but to anyone with a spark of curiosity in them.

N. C. Lee

### Andrology and reproduction

**Andrology and Human Reproduction: Serono Symposia Publications.** Vol. 47. Ed. by A. Negro-Vilar, A. Isidori, J. Paulson *et al.* Pp. xv + 341. Illustrated. \$105. New York: Raven Press. 1989.

Hierdie boek is 'n interessante publikasie deur verskeie outeurs wat aan 'n simposium deelgeneem het. 'n Paar van die hoofstukke dek die endokriene aspekte van menslike voortplanting, hipotalamiese hipofiseale funksie en die gebruik van GnRH-analoë vir diagnostiese en terapeutiese doeleindes. Verder is daar ook hoofstukke oor seksuele disfunksie, praktiese sowel as biochemiese

aspekte, met klem op die behandeling van hierdie probleem. Nuwe diagnostiese toetse kry ook aandag en verskeie bekende outeurs, soos Overstreet en Cohen, maak bydraes op hierdie gebied.

Opsommend is dit 'n boek wat interessante aspekte van manlike infertiliteit toelig. Daar is hoofstukke wat swak is weens swak gebruik van Engels en onvoldoende redigering, maar daar is ook uitstekende hoofstukke wat vir belangstellendes in hierdie veld besondere lig kan werp op die probleem van manlike infertiliteit.

T. F. Kruger

### Clinical genetics

**ABC of Clinical Genetics.** Ed. by H. M. Kingston. Pp. 62. Illustrated. £13. London: BMJ. 1989.

This work is essentially a compilation of a series of review articles which were published in the *British Medical Journal*. They have now been brought together in the 61 pages of this soft-covered book, printed on glossy paper in an A4 format.

Separate sections deal with clinically relevant aspects of medical genetics and, where necessary, the underlying scientific facts are explained. A great deal of factual information is provided and common problems in clinical genetics are addressed. Despite the

fact that this field is moving very quickly, the contents are up to date and accurate. Numerous tables and illustrations add interest and clarity, and the use of colour photographs enhances the pleasure of reading this book.

In view of the high quality of the contents and the presentation, the purchase price of is not excessive and this book is strongly recommended to medical students, medical practitioners and specialists who have an interest in medical genetics.

P. Beighton