

Nearly all textbooks of paediatric neurology in the Spanish language are translations of American, British or French works. This is the first multi-authored comprehensive text written primarily in Spanish by the editors and 47 additional contributing authors, all from Spain and Latin America. In this context it is unique and differs also from the single-author textbook of child neurology by Pascual-Castroviejo, published in 1983, because of the more diverse perspective inherent in multi-authored works.

The first chapter is a review of neurological physical diagnosis in children, disease categories and important laboratory investigations. It should provide a thorough introduction for paediatricians and residents in training. Chapter 2 by Campos Castello and Sfaello and colleagues is a particularly well written and systematic overview of this complex and all-encompassing topic, with enough details to be useful clinically in understanding pathogenesis and therapeutic approaches. Special consideration is afforded appropriately to the neurological complications of prematurity and also to neurosurgical conditions in the neonate. Other chapters address the topics of mental retardation, motor disturbances, paroxysmal disorders, learning disabilities, language and behavioral disorders, intracranial hypertension, meningoencephalitis, and a final chapter representing a pot-pourri of miscellaneous problems not easily categorized in other chapters. Neuromuscular disorders are included in the chapter on motor disturbances rather than being separated as an independent chapter as most modern English language textbooks would have done. The book contains very little information on neuro-embryology and congenital malformations of the nervous system, a deficiency perhaps reflecting my own personal orientation but nevertheless an important aspect of neonatal and paediatric neurology. Metabolic diseases also receive only scant attention. Neoplasms of the nervous system are included in the chapter on intracranial hypertension, though such a grouping might imply to trainees that increased intracranial pressure is a reliable and constant finding in all brain tumors, even if the text does not clarify this mistaken inference. I have the same objection to the inclusion of "coma" in this chapter on intracranial hypertension. The editors' attempt to organize the book by chapters denoting clinical presentation rather than traditional disease categories is thus only partially successful.

The text is sparingly but selectively and adequately illustrated, but because of the lower cost paper used in printing, some of the figures of imaging and of histopathology in particular have lost the sharp detail that is more early reproduced on expensive glossy pages.

For those amongst us who read Spanish, this book offers many refreshing perspectives that differ from our ingrained North American dogma, though the authors do not express ideas that diverge radically from interpretations of evidence generally accepted throughout the western world. I would recommend this book to paediatric neurologists who read even a little Spanish because it is much more than a restatement of English language textbooks of child neurology.

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**TRANSIENT GLOBAL AMNESIA AND RELATED DISORDERS.** 1990. Edited by Hans J. Markowitsch. Published by Hogrefe & Huber Publishers, Germany. 223 pages.

Few clinical presentations are as dramatic and bewildering as an episode of transient global amnesia (TGA). While the syndrome is well described, the etiology remains elusive, partly because of the transient nature of the symptoms and signs. This edited book attempts a comprehensive review, beginning with a historical introduction by the editor, followed by a clinical overview by Louis R. Caplan. There are chapters on TGA in relation to TIA, stroke, space occupying lesions, epilepsy, head trauma, migraine, and drugs. The book also includes chapters on atypical semiology of TGA, cerebral blood flow and pharmacological tests during TGA, positron emission tomographic studies, transient epileptic amnesia, neuropsychological testing during TGA and at follow-up, prognosis, transient psychogenic amnesic state and medicolegal aspects of TGA.

Like the memory disorder during TGA, the book is extensive but uneven. The chapters vary in style and quality. Although Markowitsch tends to write in slightly quaint English, his grasp of the historical and psychiatric literature of TGA is impressive. The chapter by Caplan on characteristic features of TGA is lucid and sets out criteria that while arbitrary, have the virtue of indicating the need or otherwise of investigation and prognosis. The chapter by Croisile and colleagues shows a remarkable degree of persistence and luck in documenting pharmacological testing and cerebral blood flow during TGA. S.D. Parwatikar has authored a fascinating chapter on the medicolegal aspects of TGA. He discusses transient memory loss as a legal defense, and in regard to the capacity to consent, the capacity to stand trial, competency to serve a sentence and several other issues, including sexual intercourse and TGA, enlivened by an example of a divorce case in which adultery was alleged.

The editor suggests that the incidence of TGA is rising in industrialized countries and the blurb on the back cover suggests that TGA is largely unknown to the medical community. If true, then this book is too extensive and inconsistent to educate physicians who are not neurologists. Even neurologists may find the book more useful as a reference than as a text.

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**EPILEPSY: CURRENT APPROACHES TO DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.** 1990. Edited by Dennis B. Smith. Published by Raven Press. 276 pages. \$94 Cdn. approx.

This is one of several books to appear in the last decade devoted to the topic of epilepsy. As pointed out in the preface recent publications have run the gamut from very general to highly specialized. The editor states that this book is directed primarily at the primary care physician. This might be true for a family physician with a very special interest in epilepsy but I feel that the audience most likely to benefit will be residents in neurology, neurosurgery and psychiatry, as well as clinical neu-

rologists and other specialists who frequently encounter the problem of epilepsy.

This is a multi-authored text which has been well laid out without significant overlap or repetition. The authors are clinicians practising in large tertiary care centres in the United States. The book is divided into three sections. In the first section there are four chapters dealing with treatment implications derived from the classification of seizures, the use and misuse of routine EEG, prolonged monitoring and neuroimaging. The chapter on routine EEG is particularly good. The one on neuroimaging, however, is somewhat unbalanced with a greater emphasis on PET than MRI which may well reflect the authors' area of expertise but does not reflect the general availability of these two procedures. In addition there appears to be a major oversight in that there is no mention of SPECT.

The second section deals with clinical aspects of epilepsy relating to children, adults and the elderly. Two chapters concern the adult with epilepsy, one dealing with anticonvulsant selection and the other with special treatment problems. For some reason these two chapters have been separated by the one dealing with epilepsy in the elderly. The chapter dealing with anticonvulsant selection is very good, particularly the areas concerning drug levels, generics and the special problems associated with pregnancy and breast feeding. Some mention of new drugs, however, would have been a helpful addition and I was somewhat surprised that the author did not more widely advocate the use of once-daily phenytoin. The chapter on special treatment problems is very useful in dealing with the problems of when to start and stop anticonvulsants and the use of anticonvulsants prophylactically after head injury and neurosurgical procedures. This section ends with a chapter on epilepsy surgery which unfortunately is rather disappointing as it is somewhat biased and not particularly up to date (the most recent reference was 1986).

The final section has three very useful chapters dealing with subjects which are often overlooked. The first deals with the psychological problems associated with epilepsy, the second with psychiatric problems of epilepsy and the third with epilepsy and aggression. The last pays particular attention to the use of epilepsy as a legal defence. The book concludes with a good concise overview of the basic mechanisms of epilepsy.

I think that this book has much to recommend it and that it would be a valuable addition to departmental neuroscience libraries as well as to personal libraries of those with a special interest in epilepsy.

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TREMOR. 1990. By Roger J. Elble and W.C. Koller. Published by Johns Hopkins University Press. 204 pages. \$60 Cdn. approx.

The primary purpose of this monograph as indicated by the authors in the preface is "to provide a comprehensive, integrated review of the most common forms of tremor that are encountered in clinical and laboratory settings". They have accomplished their goal quite successfully. The book is made up of 9 chapters. In the first, the authors consider the definition and

classification of tremor. They emphasize the difficulties with currently used clinical and the laboratory classification schemes. The concept that tremor is a dynamic expression of altered motor control is emphasized here and throughout the text. Because oscillations are a common mode of normal biologic function it is emphasized that some forms of tremor may represent an abnormal expression of previously purposeful neural oscillation rather than *de novo* instability. Chapter 2 reviews many methods of recording and analyzing tremor. This chapter provides information on selecting systems for quantitatively recording tremor as well as information on methods employed in tremor research. This chapter provides some very useful information for those scientists considering work in this field.

Pathological tremors can only be studied and interpreted with a full understanding of normal physiologic rhythmic oscillations. The physiology of normal tremor is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The potential sources for the two major components of this tremor (mechanical-reflex tremor and the 8-12-Hz tremor) are outlined.

The remaining Chapters 4 through 9 discuss various forms of pathological tremor. Chapter 4 considers the pathophysiology of essential tremor and also includes a review of several animal models of postural tremor and neuronal oscillation. Chapter 5 reviews the pharmacological and surgical treatments of essential tremor. Chapter 6 provides a nice review of the clinical characteristics, pathophysiology and management of various forms of cerebellar tremor. Parkinsonian tremor is reviewed in the following chapter. A brief discussion of tremor induced by drugs such as antipsychotics, beta-adrenergic agonists, lithium, valproic acid, tricyclic antidepressants, ethanol, caffeine and theophylline and other agents is provided in Chapter 8. The final chapter briefly considers a number of "usual" forms of tremor, including midbrain tremor, tremor associated peripheral neuropathy, task-specific tremors (with an emphasis on primary writing tremor), post-traumatic tremor and psychogenic tremor.

The authors emphasize that the book was not designed as an encyclopedia of tremor. Indeed certain topics such as the tremors of Wilson's disease and other rhythmical movements including segmental myoclonus are not considered. However, these two extremely prolific experts in the field of tremor have accomplished their goal of "not simply summarizing existing facts but rather stimulating new ideas in the reader." There is something here for all students of neuromuscular control whether they are working at the clinical or basic science level.

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POST-POLIO SYNDROME. 1991. T.L. Munsat. Published by Butterworth-Heinemann. 126 pages. \$50 Cdn. approx.

This multi-authored book purports to review the current state of knowledge of and treatment for the Post-Polio Syndrome (PPS). It must be asked, however, if this task really requires a whole book, even such a slim one, given the limited information presented here.

In ten chapters, the authors cover the history of polio and its epidemics, the biology of polio virus, the criteria for the diagnosis of PPS, the electrophysiological and muscle biopsy findings