

or single case reports, so that now over 60 lacunar “syndromes” have been described, with varying authority. Thus a book surveying the confused terminology of the subject, defining the pathology and clinical presentations of all the recognized small deep infarcts of the brain white matter, and discussing the natural history of the condition, is timely; and we are fortunate that here it is done so well.

Dr. C. Miller Fisher contributes the second chapter – a personal view of lacunar infarcts – in which he provides his present view of their commoner pathologies. As is characteristic in larger minds, his opinions have changed over the years. It is unfortunate and quite unnecessary in an academic work that bald refutations should have been allowed to remain in the texts of subsequent authors. Academic disagreement is appropriate and stimulating but better writers eschew rudeness.

Small, deep infarcts also lead to clinical syndromes which, though reasonably characteristic, are less-well recognized than the pure motor, pure sensory or sensorimotor strokes, or the ataxic-hemiparesis/dysarthria-clumsy hand syndrome(s). Single chapters in this book review the presentations and pathology of striatocapsular, caudate, thalamic, centrum ovale, internal watershed and deep cerebellar infarcts and delineate also those resulting from anterior choroidal occlusion. Certainly not all of these are lacunar syndromes, but they warrant and receive appropriate attention, given the title of the work.

Is it a paradox that the whirlwind speed of CD-ROM should, but does not, allow the most efficient access to specific data contained within a data-mass? The fable of the hare and the tortoise trudges to mind. This book would probably cost less on a platter, but the speed of the processor always overwhelms the orderly progression of logical human thought and inhibits memorization. The reader who spends rather a lot of money on this useful book will possess a complete reference source to consult when a patient with a deep white matter infarct is seen, and will enjoy browsing – but the similarities between the features of lacunar and major occlusive strokes and the present deficiencies in therapy for each do rather remind one of the letter sent by a child to her aunt thanking her for the present of a book about elephants “. . . which tells me more about elephants than I wanted to know.” Experts allowing free flow to their knowledge may dissect the anatomy of a disease more minutely than the condition warrants. Does it really help to define *classical*, *partial*, *extended*, *occasional* and *multiple* lacunar syndromes? And if so, how?

Neurologists with a special interest in stroke will certainly want to own this book; but for the majority I suggest that they recommend it – quite strongly – to their medical librarian as a worthy acquisition; and they should be the first to read it, for at the least the information gleaned will let them give a more sapient prognosis; the chapters on MRI and on striatocapsular infarcts are superb; and the sometimes sloppy grammar and spelling are minor irritants.

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EPILEPTIC SEIZURES AND SYNDROMES. 1994. Edited by P. Wolf. Published by John Libbey and Company. 678 pages. \$C140.00.

Despite a huge cast of authors, this book is easy to read and

admirably combines clinical themes with reviews of clinical, laboratory and animal research.

The book is divided into seven well organized sections. Section 1 addresses important issues in the classification and terminology of both seizures and epileptic syndromes. The second section deals with some of the less well recognized syndromes, such as the reflex epilepsies, and effectively uses clinical illustrations. Within this section are chapters which deal with the presently recognized absence syndromes and an additional new syndrome with perioral myoclonia and absences. The book is enhanced by chapters, which express the opinions of experts, such as Dr. Andermann who argues that absences are non-specific symptoms of a variety of etiologically and anatomically diverse processes.

Section 3 reviews the idiopathic epileptic syndromes. The genetics of epilepsy and gene mapping are discussed. Benign neonatal convulsions, West syndrome, “grand-mal on awakening” and numerous other syndromes are covered. There is an excellent chapter on the extent of our knowledge of benign epilepsy with centrotemporal spikes. Other chapters deal with other well recognized syndromes and syndromes which are either less well known or newly described. There is also an excellent discussion of the generalized epilepsies and idiopathic localization related epilepsies as part of a continuum.

The fourth section: “symptomatic and cryptogenic epilepsy syndromes” has chapters on the Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, Rasmussen’s encephalitis and seizures from each of the cortical lobes. Section 5 is entitled “epileptogenesis and ictogenesis: epilepsy as a dynamic process”. Among the best chapters in this section is one which deals with the potential association between febrile seizures and mesial temporal sclerosis.

Section 6 addresses intractability and some of the newer therapeutic strategies. The final section is devoted to psychogenic seizures and psychotherapy.

Overall this book is well written and provides insights into the limits of our knowledge of important topics which we encounter daily. This book deserves a place on the shelves of all who care for patients with epilepsy.

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MOLECULAR NEUROPATHOLOGY. 1995. Edited by Gareth W. Roberts and Julia M. Polak. Published by Cambridge University Press. 189 pages. C\$49.00.

This relatively short publication aims to provide an introduction to the essential techniques required to study the molecular biology of human brain diseases. The book is multiauthored and divided in two sections. The first is devoted to basic techniques and the second to applications. The technique section opens with a short chapter which presents the general principles of brain banking; it is superficial and not very informative. Possible contacts and resources in Europe, the U.K. and North America are omitted. The chapter on RNA isolation and analysis is very good but becomes quite technical at times. The segments on the polymerase chain reaction, in situ hybridization, immunohistochemistry and autoradiography are well written and fulfill very well the stated aim of the editors. Part 2 includes excellent short chapters on transgenic mice, cerebral transplants and image analysis. Two review chapters are also included, one