

not all discussed. The chapter by Eisen discussing ALS as a multi-factorial disease is interesting, but the statement on clinical issues "that clinical or electromyographic fasciculation is considered diagnostic for ALS" is just simply not true. The author may have attempted to soften this by the following statement "that fasciculations occurring for the first time over the age of 45 of 50 may not be benign". Nonetheless, such an inaccuracy should have been caught by the editorial group. Finally, references are not consistently formatted within the text. For instance, the chapter by Mitsumoto and Piro lists references alphabetically, while the majority of other chapters list according to citation.

One last concern relates to the omission of discussions of neurofilament metabolism within this text. Although passing references are made to the transgenic models of neurofilament over-expression, such a chapter omission within the text is glaring.

Overall therefore, this is a good text, topical, with a few minor deficiencies described above. It will certainly be a useful reference and updates the previous text on Motor Neuron Diseases in the Advances in Neurology Series edited by Rowland.

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CONTINUOUS SPIKES AND WAVES DURING SLOW SLEEP, ELECTRICAL STATUS EPILEPTICUS DURING SLOW SLEEP, ACQUIRED EPILEPTIC APHASIA AND RELATED CONDITIONS. 1995. Edited by A. Beaumanoir, M. Bureau, T. Deonna, L. Mira, CA. Tassinari. Published by John Libbey & Company Limited. 260 pages. \$C77.00

Landau-Kleffner syndrome (LKS) has received a great deal of media attention as steroid treatment seemed to offer a "cure" for a variety of children with serious language disorders. This book summarizes a symposium in Venice in 1993 on LKS and related disorders. I approached the book hoping for some clarity; alas there is little.

The title is unfocused and so is the book. It is divided into 7 "Parts", each with several short chapters; however there are no subheadings to indicate the rationale for the parts. Some chapters are very difficult to read with phrases such as "extralinguistic sectorial neurophysiological destructing". One chapter has a single subheading of Introduction – the introduction is the entire chapter.

Part 1 consists of 2 chapters devoted to issues of language development. Basso clearly defines 3 ways of conceptualizing language development – language is a product of learning, lan-

guage is a product of intelligence (Piaget) and language is an innate faculty altered by experience (Chomsky).

Part 2 has five chapters that mostly focus definitions of Continuous Spikes and Waves in Slow Sleep (CSWS) and Epileptic Aphasia. The chapter by Deonna and Roulet "Acquired epileptic aphasia: definition of the syndrome and current problems" is excellent but the other chapters rely mostly on personal experience with a few PET scans or neuropsychology followups. At the end of the section, the reader is still very unclear about the basic syndrome definitions and Hirsch et al. conclude "the eponym, Landau-Kleffner syndrome should be extended to acquired deterioration of any higher cerebral function occurring in children displaying EEG paroxysmal abnormalities increased during sleep and epileptic seizures regressing over time." Do we even need the EEG abnormalities?

Part 3 is devoted to electrophysiologic studies. There is a review of the general issue of activation of epileptic discharge by sleep. Dr. Frank Morrell has a masterful chapter arguing that in the LKS with CSWS, the EEG discharge is a form of secondary bilateral synchrony and that the fundamental problem in LKS is a disturbance in the normal developmental pruning of excessive synapses. In another chapter, three patients with CSWS are described with brain mapping investigations suggesting a focal origin for their generalized EEG spike wave. A further chapter on evoked potentials suggests that LKS is a disorder of central sound processing while CSWS does not have this problem.

Part 4 has four chapters that appear to focus on the relationship between cognitive function and EEG discharge. Part 5 has two chapters that discuss a few cases and one chapter that critiques the EEG definition of CSWS (85 per cent of slow sleep occupied by spike and wave). Part 6 consists of three unrelated clinical discussions including one on methylphenidate for associated hyperactivity. In addition, there is a forty page chapter with one case report after another. These cases apparently were drawn from a series of forms filled out by symposium participants. It is unclear how many forms there were and from how many centres. The form is not offered and it is clear that much of the material was incomplete. Part 7 has six chapters that review the case material from the submitted forms.

This book will be of interest to a very limited audience. The potpourri approach will help an expert pediatric epileptologist know that these distressing syndromes are hard to define, have unclear pathophysiology and an inconsistent response to a variety of anecdotal treatments. We are a long way from understanding these poignant clinical problems.

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