

covers aspects of anatomy and physiology while the second half explores the topic from the clinicians point of view, particularly in relation to the investigation and surgical treatment of mesial frontal originating seizures. The pitfalls in documenting seizures from this area clinically and electrographically are pointed out and the potential misdiagnosis of SMA seizures as pseudoseizures or paroxysmal nocturnal dystonia is addressed. Although the effect of surgical ablation of the SMA for epilepsy is discussed, there is little comment in regard to the effect of other lesions such as stroke and tumor on motor control. As might be expected in any book with 91 authors, there is a considerable variation in quality and style from chapter to chapter as well as a lot of repetition. Although patchy in areas and not entirely comprehensive, the text does generally serve its purpose as a review of "the most recent basic and clinical research on the supplementary sensorimotor area of the cortex". This would be a suitable starting point for anyone seeking details of the role of this area in motor control or epilepsy.

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**FETAL DEVELOPMENT. A PSYCHOBIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE.** 1995. Edited by Jean-Pierre Lecanuet, William P. Fifer, Norman A. Krasnegor and William P. Smotherman. Published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New Jersey, USA and Hove, UK. 512 pages. \$C130.00.

When I first received this monograph and read its title, I prejudicially decided that this book would find its home on my "fiction" bookshelf. After actually reading a couple of chapters, my scientific snobbery about all behavioral research soon dissolved into self-embarrassment for my impulsive lack of scientific objectivity; I realized that in my hands was the finest contemporary statement of knowledge on fetal behaviour using criteria no less rigid than the standards of experimental physiology laboratories.

The book was inspired by a conference jointly sponsored by the Human Learning and Behavior Branch of the National Institute of

Child Health and Human Development of the NIH (USA) and the Laboratoire de Psycho-Biologie du Développement du Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Unité de Recherche Associée (URA) et l'École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE), held in Paris, France in September, 1992. The contents, however, were written and submitted independently after the meeting.

The volume consists of 24 chapters that focus on prenatal behavioural development. Data are collected from both human and animal fetal behaviour and emphasize the normal psychobiological repertoire, attempting to relate them to postnatal adaptations. Many of the chapters are physiological monitoring data of heart rate patterns, circadian rhythms, breathing patterns and hiccups. Others describe and analyze motor patterns and responses to exogenous stimuli, such as sound, maternal movement and maternal emotional states which may cause adrenalin release that crosses the placenta. Data on animals range from chick embryos to rodents to primates such as the baboon. The transition from prenatal to postnatal life is addressed in terms of differences in perception of sensory modalities. The value of habituation in postnatal life also is discussed in the context of gestational age.

Though most of the book focuses on normal adaptations, some pathological situations also are discussed, in particular the effects of alcohol, nicotine and other potential neurotoxins on the fetus. Methodologies with their inherent strengths and weaknesses in terms of collecting data that are both statistically significant and scientifically meaningful are mentioned, but authors do not become too distracted with the technical aspects of data collection and focus more on the interpretations and implications of those data.

In sum, I was favourably impressed with this volume as a useful contribution to an understanding of neural function in the immature state of the fetus and transitional newborn, and would recommend this book to neurologists and paediatricians interested in neonatal neurology. Coming from a skeptical paediatric neurologist/developmental neuropathologist, this is a strong endorsement.

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