Book Reviews

DIABETIC NEUROPATHY. By Peter James Dyck, P.K. Thomas, Arthur K. Asbury, Albert I. Winegard and Daniel Porte. Published by W.B. Saunders Company, 1987. 322 pages. $117Cdn approx.

There are six million persons in the United States who suffer from diabetes mellitus, a prevalence that is probably representative of most western countries. Although the prevalence of the neuropathy is not known, the editors estimate it is 10%. The symptoms are remarkably varied and distressing. Unfortunately, the mechanism is still unknown, and there is no specific treatment of proven value. Nonetheless, in recent years there has been an encouraging growth of research on the subject. This has resulted in new hope, and even practical suggestions, as to how diabetic neuropathy might be managed.

The five editors, all internationally recognized scientists, have assembled an additional forty-five authors, allowing thirty chapters to be written. The first section deals with the clinical syndrome of diabetes mellitus. The next section discusses epidemiology, diagnosis, staging and classification, focal and multifocal neuropathies, polyneuropathy, autonomic neuropathy, vascular abnormalities and hypoglycemia. There is a particularly detailed section on motor function, cutaneous sensation, cardiovascular autonomic neuropathy, pupillary functions, motor testing, sexual and bladder dysfunction, gastrointestinal symptoms and electrophysiological testing. The section on therapy and therapeutic trials gives a comprehensive discussion of the highly controversial topic of therapy with myoinositol and aldose reductose inhibitors. In the same section, there are clearly described, and more practical, discussions of vitamin therapy and management of autonomic neuropathy, the diabetic foot and intractable pain. The section on pathology and pathophysiology provides state-of-the-art descriptions of human pathology, animal pathology and pathophysiology, diabetes in DB Wistar rats, axonal transport, the nerve microenvironment, energy metabolism, altered myoinositol metabolism and the nature of inositol phospholipids.

The text is detailed, yet well organized and clearly written. Each chapter has a table at the beginning which lists the main topics by page number for quick reference. Most chapters end with a concisely worded conclusion. Some of the chapters are small, consisting of only a page and a half and a few references. These could have been combined with other chapters. Acronyms are wisely kept to a minimum but there is no listing of their meaning at the beginning of each chapter, so that one has the irritating chore of searching for it through the text.

This is a superb book, the first of its kind, and likely to be a standard for many years. It should be purchased by all those who have anything to do with clinical or research activity, not only in diabetic neuropathy but in the broader subjects of diabetes mellitus and peripheral neuropathy.

Charles Bolton
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HANDBOOK OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE. Edited by William C. Koller. Published by Marcel Dekker, Inc. 520 pages.

This is a compact book on Parkinson's disease made up of 26 chapters. The topics are well chosen and the authors are authorities in the fields to which they contribute. The chapters are clearly written and the book provides a good survey of current knowledge and opinion concerning the disease. The introduction states that the book should be useful for the clinician in charge of everyday care of patients, and for the investigative scientist. There are naturally some limitations, however. The chapter on levodopa does not discuss early combination therapy with dopamine agonists, although most neurologists with a special interest in the disease would certainly regard this as an important topic for treating the majority of patients. In the chapter on artificial dopamine agonists, black and white illustrations of "violaceous capillary networks" and "reddened oedematous skin" are not very helpful. One important area of advance in studying Parkinson's disease is the use of new imaging techniques such as PET and MRI, and it might have been useful to have a chapter addressing this topic. Nevertheless, the overall quality of the book more than makes up for such occasional lapses. In the opinion of this reviewer the book will be of most value to neurologists who want an "update" of progress in Parkinson's disease over the last 5-10 years.

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CLINICAL PEDIATRIC NEUROLOGY. A SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS APPROACH. By Gerald M. Fenichel. Published by W.B. Saunders, 1988. 401 pages. $44Cdn approx.

This well written and attractively produced book by one of the most respected paediatric neurologists in the United States, is very clinical in scope and is organized by signs and symptoms rather than traditional categories of diseases. The 18 chapters are heralded by such titles as Paroxysmal disorders, Headache, The hypotonic infant, Ataxia, Hemiplegia, Disturbances in sensation, Disorders of ocular motility, and Disorders of cranial volume and shape. Tables are simple but useful, such as one listing 13 common anticonvulsants with recommended starting dosage, maintenance dosage, serum concentrations (therapeutic ranges), and half-lives. Regrettably, concentrations are not expressed in SI units in the table, though cited in the text. Several examples of EEGs illustrate classical

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