Book Reviews

Epilepsy: Problem Solving in Clinical Practice

edited by Dieter Schmidt and Steven C. Schachter, eds., London, Martin Dunitz Ltd., 1999, \$99.50

I was a bit skeptical when the authors suggested that this book was significantly different than other texts on epilepsy, but they are indeed correct. This book is not intended to be a thorough reference text on seizure disorders. Rather, it is a "practical guide to today's vexing problems based on clinical experience" written by an impressive international roster of well-recognized experts. Topics include "many clinical problems . . . for which there are no easy answers."

The book is divided into two main sections: diagnostic and therapeutic. In my mind, it is also divided into two types of chapters, almost equally: those that would be useful for all neurologists, and those that are primarily useful for epileptologists. There are excellent and very readable chapters on common clinical problems such as the practical differential diagnosis of seizures, epilepsy in the elderly, nonepileptic seizures, psychiatric issues, cognitive dysfunction, when to start and stop antiepileptic drugs, epilepsy and pregnancy, and "the ten most common treatment errors in epilepsy." These chapters would be very useful for any practicing neurologist, as well as neurologists with a special interest in epilepsy. In addition, there are more specialized topics covered in detail, such as epileptic seizures progressing into nonepileptic pseudoseizures, genetic epilepsy syndromes, the classification and recognition of cortical dysplasias, cost-effective presurgical evaluations, and intractable myoclonic absences. These chapters are sufficiently detailed to be of great interest and utility to epileptologists, but are probably best avoided by general neurologists.

Overall, the book is very well written, and I had trouble putting it down. There are many useful tables and figures. Almost all of the chapters do an excellent job of concisely summarizing the relevant literature. Furthermore, the authors also give their own approach when the literature does not provide clear answers (not a rare occurrence by any means). This is probably what makes this book most useful and most interesting. Reading Olivier Du-

lac's approach to Rasmussen's and intractable myoclonic absences, John Freeman's viewpoint on lipid and beta-hydroxybutyrate levels in the ketogenic diet, and David Treiman's section entitled "If I had status epilepticus" (including treating his residual epileptiform discharges "until either status epilepticus stopped or I died during the effort to stop it") was riveting.

Epilepsy: Problem Solving in Clinical Practice is a unique and very readable book, with something for all neurologists. For the general neurologist, about half of the book is quite useful, with practical approaches to common clinical problems. For the epileptologist, the entire book is useful, as it includes several unique chapters on difficult clinical issues written by well-known experts. Although it is not a comprehensive reference on epilepsy (and was never intended to be), it is a valuable addition to my book collection, and probably will be to yours.

Lawrence J. Hirsch, MD

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Books Received

The Assessment of Aphasia and Related Disorders

by Harold Goodglass and Edith Kaplan, 29 pp., ill, Philadelphia, PA, Lea & Febiger, 2000

The Brain's Sense of Movement

by Alain Berthoz, 337 pp., ill, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2000, \$45

Spinal Cord Injury: A Guide for Living

by Sara Palmer, Kay Harris Kriegsman, and Jeffrey B. Palmer, 290 pp., ill, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000, \$15.95

Correction

August 8 International Newsletter

In the first paragraph, "In western China" should have read: "In the West." The correct Web site address for the Institute of Clinical Neuroimmunology is <http://www.med.uni-muenchen.de/inim/home/home1e.htm>. Foreign accents were placed incorrectly above the following names, which should read: Dr. María Dolores Castaño Pérez and Professor Jorge Matías-Guiu. The publisher apologizes for these errors.

Brachial amyotrophic diplegia: A slowly progressive motor neuron disorder

In the correspondence "Brachial amyotrophic diplegia: A slowly progressive motor neuron disorder" (*Neurology* 2000;54:2354-2355), one author's name was inadvertently omitted. Francisco Meli, MD, should have been included. The publisher apologizes for the error.

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