

REVIEWS

A MANUAL OF HEAD INJURIES IN GENERAL SURGERY

by Graham Martin, M.B.B.S., F.R.C.S., M.R.C.P., Publisher—William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd.

In the preface of this little excellent book, the author stated that he wrote it for the practising general surgeon and post-graduate student. For the housemen, students and nurses he included details of management and nursing of these patients. He has succeeded admirably. It is the ideal departmental book in a General Surgical Unit which have to look after head injury patients.

Every chapter begins with a summary of its contents and ends with a series of multiple choice questions which if the reader answers will resummarise what he has just read. The important points are also in heavy type.

The brief chapter on the pathology of head injuries is well written and concise. The practising general surgeon need not wade through a lot of interesting facts of no practical value to him. On page 18 section 1.15 it must be pointed out to the Singapore General Surgeon that we see a fair number of chronic subdurals in patients whose ages are between 20 to 50.

Chapter 2 is excellent for the surgeons, registrars, students and nurses for whom this book is written. It covers every aspect of the management laid out in a logical and simplified manner.

On page 36, section 2.13, we had a patient who had a metal rod thrust through his forehead into the rostral end of his 3rd ventricle. His blood pressure could not be maintained with all the resuscitation measures we had. Angiography showed no haematoma and autopsy confirmed this. The rostral end of the 3rd ventricle had infarcted.

On pages 37 and 38, sections 2.16 and 2.17, Mr. Martin's views on the intravenous drip are exactly the views of mine and these were taught and demonstrated to me by my old chief, Mr. Murray Falconer.

On page 41 section 2.22, the present view on the use of hypothermia is clearly stated.

On page 43 sections 2.26 and 2.27 define the use of steroids and intravenous mannitol clearly. These sections should be read carefully.

Chapter 3 is again excellent because what is advocated is so practical and logical.

The indications for drainage of intracranial

haemorrhage are clearly enunciated on page 51 to 55.

On page 56 sections 3.14, 3.15, 3.16 and 3.17 the general surgeon has to be very careful that he does not miss an intracranial haematoma for the Singapore patients often have these signs.

The treatment of depressed fractures on page 60, section 3.20 should also be carefully read because the views here are so practical and logical.

Again on pages 61 to 63 the sections 3.26 to 3.31 are excellent. These deal with compound vault fractures, fractures into sinuses, CSF leaks, penetrating wounds and missile wounds of the head.

Chapter 4 is very good and the advice is very sound. Of course as each surgeon gains his experience he has his own way of doing things.

Chapter 5 is again excellent. This chapter is very practical and is an excellent guide also to the doctor who is writing a report for the lawyer. The post-traumatic deficits are clearly enumerated here.

Chapter 6 is again excellent. The gist of each complication of the head injury is there.

This book will help very greatly every general surgeon or physician in private practice who has to manage head injuries without the Government hospital facilities of neuroradiology. It will sieve out the facts from the fantasies of the management of head injuries for him.

For the post-graduate student, there is a section on "Further reading". The post-graduate general surgical trainee cannot afford not to have this book. It is cheap at £2. For the undergraduate student, all that he requires to know about head injuries is found in the book. For the neurosurgical nurse, this book will help her to understand how she is helping her patient.

The material in this book is very sound, safe and mature, and must have been obtained from a large experience.

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CLINICAL RESEARCH FOR ALL

by Cyril Maxwell

Cambridge Medical Publications

This small book fills an important gap in the training of doctors. It aims to introduce to the enquiring mind of the young graduate (or undergraduate) the exciting world of clinical research. It is succinct and lucid and the style is easy and conversational. It effectively instructs and stimulates and "assumes complete ignorance on the part of you, reader, and works through everything from the very germinal beginnings to the final end product, namely the publication of your results".

The opening chapter expounds the philosophy underlying clinical research and rapidly points out the opportunities awaiting the keen mind. The main body of information has a distinct bias towards drug-trials which probably reflects the authors' personal experience. A lot

of useful practical guides are offered including such important subjects as sampling, randomisation and data-handling. The few pages introducing statistics are certainly welcome and help to reduce dreaded statistics to size.

The book aptly ends with a chapter on ethics, and the extracts from the Declaration of Helsinki are welcome as a healthy reminder of the moral responsibilities involved.

This book should be read by all doctors, in particular by those who are academically inclined.

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PHYSIOTHERAPY IN PAEDIATRICS

by Roberta Shepherd, Heinemann, 1974

This book by Roberta Shepherd, a physiotherapist dealing with infants and children, is a well-written book. It is not the usual type of book on physiotherapy with an unbalanced account of exercises without scientific rationalisation. In this book the authoress, who is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Physiotherapy in Sydney, gives a broad discussion on the anatomical, physiological and, what is more important, the psychological background to the various conditions needing physiotherapy for infants and children.

The section on cerebral palsy is excellent with a good description of normal CNS developmental signs in infants, and the various CNS signs are seen in various types of cerebral palsy. There are also descriptions of problems and

questions posed by parents of cerebral spastics, and how to deal with these questions. Quite rightly she stresses that management of problems in infants and children involves the management of parents also.

There are also useful chapters on congenital abnormalities and mental retardation, and the physiotherapeutic problems arising from them. Respiratory problems are dealt with very adequately.

As a whole, this is a useful book for physiotherapists as well as paediatricians.

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