

## Book reviews

### **The Basic Science of Oncology**

Edited by I. F. Tannock and R. P. Hill 1987. Format 8 1/2 x 11 ".VIII, 398 pages, 321 figures, US \$ 37.50 ISBN 0 08 032389-8 Pergamon Press, Oxford

This volume incorporates the latest research results into a basic text based on a course in "The Basic Science of Oncology" at the Ontario Cancer Institute in Toronto. First, it contains a discussion of the entire range of problems related to the causation of cancer, including, for example, chemical carcinogenesis, induction by irradiation, oncogenesis and virus etiology. The genetic basis of carcinogenesis is also discussed at length.

The second section is concerned with cancer biology. This section describes the properties of malignant cells, tumor growth and cell kinetics, and the mechanisms of metastasis. Tumor markers and immunological reactions are discussed in a separate chapter.

Finally, the third section contains eight contributions on the fundamentals of cancer treatment, including two important contributions on the cellular basis of cancer and experimental radiotherapy. Furthermore, there are contributions on the biological and pharmacological properties of cytostatic drugs, on special aspects of experimental chemotherapy, and on special aspects of immunotherapy. The chapter on the possible applications of hyperthermia is especially valuable.

The editors and the 15 authors are almost all from the University of Toronto, which may explain why the quality of the individual contributions is surprisingly uniform. As a whole, the volume offers the physician interested in, or working with, oncology an interesting compendium which reflects the latest state-of-the-art of oncology. Although special considerations could not – and this is intrinsic to the

concept of the book – be covered completely, this book is important and worth the attention of the neurooncologist.

### **Clinical Problems of Brainstem Disorders**

Edited by Klaus Kunze, W. H. Zangemeister, A. Arlt

With contributions by 36 authors

1986, X, 246 pages, 1 color plate, 197 figures, 41 tables, 17 × 24 cm, cloth, DM 139,-

ISBN 3 13 694501 8

Thieme, Stuttgart

This book is composed of a series of papers and lectures presented at a Symposium held during the 13th World Congress for Neurology whose central theme was brainstem disorders. Editing such Congress reports always presents problems with consistency of composition and homogeneity of terminology. The editors of this book have solved these problems relatively well.

The thirty-three papers are divided into four sections. After a section on the clinical symptoms of brainstem disorders which, naturally, emphasizes disorders of the vertebro-basal circulation, there is a very informative section on vascular anatomy and imaging in the region of the brainstem. This section emphasizes MRI and SPECT more than angiography.

The section on the use of evoked potentials should be of special importance to the neurosurgeon – let me remind you here only of the power of this method for the establishment of intravital brain death. The same is true of the next and longest chapter, which is concerned with the clinical importance of brainstem reflexes. Here we find twelve very informative and clinically useful reports which are, however, of uneven quality.

Because of the high quality of some of the contributions, this thin volume is able to cover its very complex subject and, beyond this, even to present some of the latest developments in the field.

Therapeutic aspects are, not surprisingly, actually of secondary importance.

Even though this book will certainly be mostly of interest to neurologists, neurosurgeons can profit greatly from the descriptions of symptoms and, even more, from the presentation of methodical progress especially in the field of evoked potentials. The book is very well illustrated and bound; the price is a bit high for such a slim volume; however, as with all congress proceedings, the price was dictated by the number of books printed. As a whole, this book is worthy of recommendation.

### **The Slit Ventricle Syndrom**

by R. Gruber, 1987

92 pages, 63 figures, 4 tables, 17 × 24 cm, hard cover, DM 89,-

ISBN 3 7773 0821 8

Hippokrates Verlag GmbH, Stuttgart

This little volume concerns itself with the slit ventricle syndrome, which can occur as a complication of hydrocephalus internus therapy in childhood. Although I would doubt whether the incidence of this syndrome justifies a separate volume, it is certainly commendable that this aspect of the shunt therapy has been treated extensively. Actually, the description does not present any new aspects or any information other than that already available in the literature. The author has, however, taken the trouble to collect and organize numerous details, especially those concerning the various shunt systems, and to comment on them and relate them to the subject of the book. Even the development of the anti-siphon device, which the author emphasizes, is based on work by Fox and his co-workers published in 1972. The use of this anti-siphon device has been routine, or even obligatory, in many clinics for a long time.

As a whole, the time and trouble taken for the description of a rare complication seems rather out of proportion, especially when we consider that only a small percentage of children whose CT shows a slit ventricle syndrome develops corresponding clinical symptoms. Observation of a large number of pedi-

atric patients shows that the clinical importance of the slit ventricle syndrome lies more in the fact that in case of a failure of the shunt system a very abrupt and drastic increase of intracranial pressure can occur and endanger the children as a result of a change in the intracranial compliance. The slit ventricle syndrome, however, plays only a small role in the general problem of shunt therapy.

In summary, it can be said that this short collection of information certainly offers the interested physician some easily accessible information. One should ask, on the other hand, whether the costs and the result are in an adequate relationship.

### **Perspectives in Pediatric Pathology**

Series Editors: H. S. Rosenberg, J. Bernstein

Vol. 10: Central Nervous System Diseases

Editors: H. S. Rosenberg, J. Bernstein

1987. VII, 264 pages, 109 figures, 31 tables, hard cover, DM 316,-

ISBN 3 8055 4403 0

S. Karger AG, Basel

Of the seven contributions in this nicely bound volume, three are of special interest to the neurosurgeon. First, there is a chapter on central nervous system tumors of childhood by Becher and Holliday (Toronto). This contribution consists of good neuropathological descriptions of tumors of the central nervous system in childhood with many illustrations and relatively short descriptions of the morbidity. The use of the WHO Classification Guidelines makes comparisons with other readings easy. It is also noteworthy that contributions in English from European authors are included. An interesting contribution on the "Biology of Human Gliomas" reports on the results of biochemical, morphological, and cell culture studies. This contribution also contains descriptions of the growth kinetics of these tumors in vitro. Finally, two other contributions, one on primary intracranial germ cell tumors and one on retinoblastomas, should be useful to neurosurgeons. These are also generally morphological or neuropathologically oriented, but contain useful information for the clinician, too.

This volume is certainly informative for the pediatrician, the oncologist, and the neuropathologist, and of more marginal value for the neurosurgeon. The book is extremely well printed and bound.