

JAMIESON'S FIRST NOTEBOOK OF HEAD INJURY. Third Edition. By Brian North. Published by Butterworths. 116 pages. \$12 Cdn. approx.

This short and entertaining volume dedicated to the basics of head injury is a 1983 update of the original volume written by Dr. Kenneth G. Jamieson of the University of Queensland (Australia) in 1984 and subsequently updated in 1971.

Dr. Jamieson's original aim was to produce a short and simple volume directed primarily to medical students and rural practitioners and nurses in the Australian environment to assist them in their care of the head injured when travel distances to a neurosurgical centre are great.

Resultant upon Dr. Jamieson's untimely death in 1976, Dr. Brian North (Director of Neurosurgery, Royal Adelaide Hospital, Adelaide, South Australia) has undertaken the current update.

This volume carries out very well its primary purpose of remaining simple and straight forward and being directed to those who know nothing or little about the care of head injuries.

There is no question that the book is directed to the "neurosurgically uninitiated" and this volume should be considered in no way a reference for neurologic or neurosurgical trainees.

I would consider this book most valuable in the libraries of medical students, clinical clerks, surgical residents undertaking a transient neurosurgical rotation, rural physicians and rural hospital emergency departments. The entertaining, and often humorous style of writing, use of rhyme and use of diagrams serve to emphasize important points. For example, in the section related to chronic subdural hematoma, the following is found —

An old man was found on the ground —
Some days he'd almost come round.
They stood and debated
While he fluctuated,
At P.M. a large clot was found.

In light of this volume's brevity, clarity, easy readability and inexpensiveness it is recommended to the categories of readers noted above.

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THE NEUROMUSCULAR JUNCTION. 1984. Edited by Brumback and Gerst. Published by Futura Publishing Company, Mount Kisco, New York. 354 pages.

It is a surprise that 354 pages are now required to detail the complexities of the structure, function, and pathology of the neuromuscular junction. In this volume, the multiple authors provide current and detailed accounts of the light and electron-microscopic features of the end plate, of the process of neuromuscular transmission and of the actions of cholinesterases, depolarizing and non depolarizing drugs and anticholinesterases at the end plate. A chapter on the effects of nerve injury primarily addresses the issue of muscle function in denervation and its relevance in this volume is questionable. The final two chapters deal with the clinical disorders of the neuromuscular junction. Donald Sanders covers myasthenia gravis and its pathogenesis, clinical diagnostic features and management fully

and accurately. The chapter dealing with other neuromuscular disorders is less successful. After descriptions of miscellaneous neuromuscular disorders including the myasthenic syndrome, congenital myasthenia and botulism, a good deal of information is offered on drugs, toxins and venoms that remains to be better-defined in the light of our newer knowledge and ability to understand altered neuromuscular function.

This book is a comprehensive, very detailed and thorough examination of the mammalian neuromuscular junction. It will be used mainly as a reference source for a basic understanding of the structure and function of the end plate. It will appeal particularly to pharmacologists and physiologists, but should be familiar territory for anaesthetists and clinicians dealing with neuromuscular disorders.

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MUSCLE PATHOLOGY. 1984. Edited by Reid R. Heffner, Jr. Churchill-Livingstone. New York, Edinburgh, Melbourne. 235 pages, 160 B&W illustrations. \$56 Cdn. approx.

This short monograph on muscle pathology is one of the Churchill-Livingstone series 'Contemporary Issues in Surgical Pathology'. The twelve chapters were written by 14 contributing authors, all from the United States. The book joins several other recent texts specifically addressing the needs of general pathologists who interpret muscle biopsies but do not require long, supplementary discussions of clinical, electromyographic, and biochemical aspects. As such, the chapters are not organized according to clinical classifications of disease, but rather on specific categories of pathologic changes seen histologically and special techniques. The importance of accurate diagnosis of histochemistry, immunofluorescence, and electron microscopy are appropriately emphasized in most chapters.

The first chapter is supposed to provide a 'clinical approach to neuromuscular disease', but is so general that it is suited only for a textbook for medical students. The table of classical classifications of diseases regrettably still lists oculopharyngeal myopathy as a muscular dystrophy, ignoring the numerous publications of the last decade demonstrating mitochondrial abnormalities as the basis of this disease; this error is rectified by Bauserman and Heffner in a later chapter (8) devoted exclusively to mitochondrial myopathies. Chapter 2 deals with the collection and preparation of the biopsy specimen. It contains no information on the technical problems of histochemical preparation. The recommended cryostat sections of 10µm are thicker than the standard 6µm used in most laboratories and could result in loss of cytologic detail, particularly in infant muscle, and too dark histochemical staining with loss of contrast between fiber types. Chapter 3 on histochemistry contains an erroneous assertion that type II fiber atrophy is characteristic of early denervation, which could lead to serious errors in diagnosis by inexperienced pathologists.

Chapter 3 by Cancilla on general reactions of muscle to injury is concise, well organized, clearly written, and contains carefully selected photo-micrographs. Another chapter (5) by Bennington and Krupp, entitled 'Morphometric analysis of muscle', is an excellent, erudite summary of a complex topic and alone is worth the price of the book.