

more general neurologist will also find the book useful because of its decided clinical slant.

I can find little to fault with the conception of execution of *Clinical Electromyography* and can recommend it as the best available text in its field.

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**COLOR ATLAS OF NEUROPATHOLOGY.** By R.O. Weller. Published by Oxford University Press, New York, 1986. 207 pages. \$112.50Cdn approx.

This first edition is but one of a planned series of Oxford Color Atlases of Pathology under the general editorship of R.C. Curran. It is written as a practical guide to the understanding and diagnosis of nervous system pathology and is directed to medical students, pathologists, neurologists and basic scientists. Though it does not plan to supplant existing texts, it does include background information on the various disease processes. After an introductory chapter on normal histology, the general field of neuromuscular disorders is supported by a series of six appendices covering histological techniques, disease classifications with some statistics and a bibliography of selected references. In reality this is a "histological" color atlas as indicated by the author in the preface and therefore the title is somewhat misleading. It is intended to illustrate through its color reproductions the tinctorial properties of stained cells and specifically directs the reader to other texts for gross pathology or ultrastructural pathology of the nervous system. Despite this focusing, some gross photographs are included as is the occasional supporting electron micrograph. The layout is attractive on durable, glossy paper and color reproduction is by and large excellent. The text is generally clear and concise and the use of clinical examples gives more meaning to the biology of described disorders. Subtle blending of standard light microscopic appearances with the more modern techniques of smears, touch preparations, cell markers, stained plastic sections, and teased fibre preparations whett the appetite.

Approximately half the space in this atlas is devoted to text. Though the author states that he does not wish to supplant existing texts, this is in actual fact a self-contained volume with a great deal of information. The use of arrows depicting specifics in photographs would greatly assist a novice reader and save on descriptive locations that expand the text. On too many occasions are cells described in detail but the photo is an overview and the magnification too low for identification.

Though duplication of photographic material and narrative does occur, this does not detract from the overall treatment of the subject. This volume is more than an atlas and should be considered as an illustrated text directed to and for use by the student, pathologist, neurologist and basic scientist. However, confining it to illustrating tinctorial properties of cells detracts from its overall scientific impact. Presumably if ultrastructure was in color, it would more liberally have been included rather

than being covered in most instances in the narrative. This is more than a useful companion, and is to be recommended for students of neuropathology at the formative stage of their careers.

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**THE WAY WE DIE.** By Leslie Ivan and Maureen Melrose. Published by Angel Press, Chichester, 1986. 106 pages.

This small paperback volume, written by a neurosurgeon and a nurse, both with considerable experience, is a thoughtful and comprehensive treatment on issues of death. The book is clearly written in lay language, complete with a glossary of medical terms.

Topics covered include: an historical background to the concept of brain death; simple, physiological explanations of consciousness, coma and death as biological processes; the dignity and indignity of dying; the patient's rights and the doctor's obligations from a medico-legal point of view; statistical summary of modes of death; an explanation of "near-death experiences"; and, finally, a review of life after death as contained in various religions along with the personal views of the authors.

The book offers a unique Canadian perspective to death issues. The clinical basis of the book, drawn from experience as well as the literature, is its main strength. The legal implications and suggested responsibilities of physicians, the suggestions for dealing with families, and the insights of the authors on the dynamics of terminal illness from the perspectives of the patient and the family, I found to be its most valuable aspects.

There are weaknesses which detract from the suitability of this volume for neurologists and neurosurgeons: it is too brief, incomplete and superficial on the criteria for brain death; it implies that EEG is necessary for the diagnosis of brain death, which it definitely is not; it does not sufficiently emphasize the importance of the brainstem death as the core of brain death, and does not comment on the allowance of preserved spinal cord reflexes (an aspect for which Dr. Ivan has made valuable original contributions). The chapters on consciousness and coma are overly simplified and of little value to clinicians. There are some inaccuracies: cerebral cortical death is said to produce persistent coma, while it typically leads to a persistent vegetative state, if the patient survives more than 2 weeks; it states that blood pH must be maintained within narrow limits or brain functions and level of consciousness are affected, while homeostatic mechanisms allow considerable resistance to the effects of metabolic alkalosis or chronic metabolic acidosis.

The authors should have more clearly specified the intended readership. I think the book is worthwhile reading for paramedical professionals, particularly those involved in intensive care units, cancer clinics, hospices or wards in tertiary hospitals. Having said this, I feel that physicians who read the book in an eclectic manner will find considerable food for thought as well.

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