"Symptoms of Neurologic Disorders" and ending with "Ethical and Legal Guidelines". It has the usual sections on peripheral neuropathies, movement disorders and other classical neurological subdivisions. It is surprisingly comprehensive, and has for example a chapter on neurologic disease during pregnancy. No textbook is perfect and, although this chapter mentions the higher incidence of carpal tunnel syndrome, Bell's palsy and meralgia paresthetica during pregnancy, there is no mention of lumbosacral plexopathy occurring as a result of prolonged labour or forceps delivery.

With its 165 chapters, this is a very comprehensive book. It has an interesting section entitled "Environmental Neurology", which covers issues like alcoholism, drug dependence, and a host of topics including heavy metal intoxication, and falls in the elderly.

In general, for a hard cover textbook, it is very up to date. The chapter on prion diseases for example has a good discussion of the 14-3-3 protein and its usefulness in Creutzfeldt Jakob disease diagnosis in CSF samples, and also a short discussion of new variant Creutzfeldt Jakob disease. The chapter on headache mentions all four of the triptans currently on the market in Canada. Surprisingly, this chapter perpetuates older terminology such as common migraine and classic migraine, and does not use the diagnostic terminology of the International Headache Society.

This is a multi-authored textbook, and the list of contributors runs to eight pages. It is very much an American textbook, with only six contributors from outside the United States. In fact, the great majority of the contributors come from New York.

In summary, this is a well-indexed and useful book. For those who want a hard cover neurology textbook which is succinct, relatively complete, and up to date in a 1000 pages, this book is a good choice.

Werner J. Becker
Calgary, Alberta

Normal and Pathologic Development of the Human Brain and Spinal Cord. 1999. By Maria Dambska, Krystyna E. Wisniewski. Published by John Libbey & Company Ltd, London, England. 212 pages. C$118.50 approx.

This book is by two neuropathologists, and is divided into two parts. The first describes normal development and the second, pathologic development. The first part is somewhat disappointing. Although there is a good description of the embryology of the brain, with excellent black and white drawings of development, the text is somewhat laborious, and not without amphigory. For example, the authors write: "We conclude that neuronal death, which is necessary for the final maturation of connections in the CNS, requires further study." Also "the role of myelin sheaths is apparently complex." Peripheral neurons are referred to as "ganglionic gangliocytes." There are a number of important omissions. For example, olfactory neurons are stated to retain their dividing potential, but not the dentate granule neurons of the hippocampus. This accounts for the sensitivity of the dentate to the mitotic spindler inhibitor colchicine. Also not mentioned are any of the genes of development that are now known. The importance of homeobox genes in rostro-caudal differentiation and sonic hedgehog protein in ventral motoric differentiation of neurons could be given, but they mention only retinoic acid. Nevertheless, the first portion of the book does describe most of the important features of development such as the radial glia and timetable of myelination and gyration. Indeed, Table 3 on myelination is especially useful.

In the second part of the book, the authors do much better, reflecting their experience as neuropathologists. Here, there is authoritative, if brief, coverage of the phakomatoses, CNS malformations, developmental disturbances due to chromosomal aberrations, and late and secondary developmental abnormalities. The justification of this last category, which includes schizencephaly and porencephaly, as separate from the long chapter on malformations of the CNS, is not entirely justified in view of our understanding of these conditions. Indeed, this brief chapter adds only hydranencephaly and cystic encephalopathy to form a loosely coherent, short chapter. The final chapter, entitled "Delay of the CNS maturation" is even shorter, constituting less than two pages. The concept of a disease consisting solely of CNS delay in maturation, is not entirely justified, although the authors refer to numerous conditions including "severe gestosis" or pre-eclampsia of pregnancy. In view of work in the UK, however, I doubt that "chronic hypoxia … leads particularly often to retardation of myelination of the CNS pathways." Nevertheless, part II contains excellent photographs of cerebella hypoplasia, lissencephaly, heterotopias, holoprosencephaly, agenesis of the corpus callosum, diplomyelia and Chiari malformation. There are fewer photographs of the phakomatoses, but then, this is a short book.

In spite of the above anomalies in English (not the authors' first language), I generally like the book and learned things while reading it. Important questions are addressed even in part I with its omissions, such as invasion of mesenchyme into the ectoderm, which brings not only blood vessels but microglia into the brain. The authors have important considerations in mind, and this is apparent when reading this book. A future edition could be enhanced by correlating with molecular knowledge, tightening the English and style of prose, and adding a few more illustrations of some of the important conditions described.

Roland Auer
Calgary, Alberta

Myasthenia Gravis and Myasthenic Disorders. First Edition. 1999. Edited by Andrew G. Engel. Published by Oxford University Press (Contemporary Neurology Series), New York. 310 pages. C$157.95 approx.

Engel presents a multi-authored scholarly work detailing current concepts about myasthenia gravis (MG) and myasthenic disorders. The volume is clearly organized in three main parts: approach to diseases of the neuromuscular junction, myasthenia gravis, and myasthenic syndromes and related disorders.

The first part on the approach to diseases of the neuromuscular junction presents much sophisticated experimental work detailing the anatomy and molecular architectures of the neuromuscular junction. An extensive section on the structure and kinetic properties of the acetylcholine receptor follows, with the last chapter outlining the electrodiagnosis of endplate disease. This part of the book proved informative and useful in collating much diffuse material into a compact format which is readily assimilated.

The second part of the book provides information about MG starting with the immunopathogenesis, including a chapter on experimental autoimmune MG, and then progressing to the