

symptomatic and asymptomatic disease, taking into account not only the severity of stenosis but other factors including plaque morphology, contralateral disease, disease presentation and certain patient variables, and presented along with some clearly developed treatment guidelines, would have been useful. This section also contains chapters on medical therapy, cardiac disease and carotid surgery, internal carotid “tandem lesions” (which unfortunately does not include the recent NASCET publication on this subject by Kappelle et al), an excellent chapter on the visual system and carotid disease, and another on the timing of surgery following a recent stroke.

The next and longest section is on anaesthetic and surgical techniques, and it consists of 16 chapters covering every aspect of the procedure you could imagine. The technique of carotid endarterectomy is the topic of three separate chapters and irresistibly slipped into three others on different subjects, each author with their own preferences, but as the editors argue in the preface this kind of repetition is unavoidable in a multi-authored text and can even be considered valuable. This section is a resource for rarer problems affecting the carotid artery, such as nonatherosclerotic narrowing, tumors, and trauma.

The next section on “Perioperative Monitoring and Management” deals at length with the shunt controversy. There are succinct chapters on the different intraoperative monitoring modalities available, and ischemic, hemodynamic, cardiac and wound complications are covered. The management of postoperative stroke and neck hematoma is too briefly discussed given their relative importance. For example, the former is not divided into deficits upon awakening versus those that are delayed in onset, the two having clearly different implications with respect to etiology, investigation and management. The value of cranial CT as a first investigation for all deficits regardless of timing, as recommended, is questionable given that hemorrhage is a rare cause of postoperative stroke, and that valuable time may be lost in its performance. The management of neck hematoma receives less than a paragraph, despite it being a life threatening situation on occasion.

Sections five and six cover postoperative care and the future of carotid endarterectomy, and includes an up-to-date chapter on carotid angioplasty and stenting, the next challenge carotid endarterectomy must face. There is also a chapter on outcome analysis, a very important topic since the indications learned from the trials can only be applied to appropriately chosen patients when the local risk of the procedure is demonstrated to be acceptable, a delicate issue when one starts considering institutional audits.

This book, with both a neurosurgeon and vascular surgeon editor, has an authorship that is well-balanced between the two specialties. It is large and comprehensive, well-indexed, and the paper and figures are of good quality making its price justifiable (although make sure the missing pages are included in your edition!). It is a good reference for surgical libraries, but I suspect has too little to offer the already experienced carotid surgeon to justify inclusion in his or her own personal library. In the interest of time and savings, surgical trainees are probably better off consulting more condensed versions of the same information available in general, multi-topic neurosurgical texts, as well as numerous recent articles and monographs on the subject.

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EPILEPSY: PROBLEM SOLVING IN CLINICAL PRACTICE. 1999. Edited by Dieter Schmidt, Steven C. Schachter. Published by Martin Dunitz. 489 pages. C\$141.85 approx.

The editors, Dr. Schmidt (Berlin) and Dr. Schachter (Boston) acknowledge that, in recent years there have been remarkable achievements in the understanding of clinical epilepsy and the introduction of new options for the treatment of seizures. These developments have been well-documented in recently published, comprehensive textbooks of epilepsy.

The purpose of this book, as stated, is to identify and help to resolve the many remaining and often complex clinical problems in the treatment of epilepsy for which there are no easy answers and which continue to puzzle clinicians and generate significant controversy in the literature and the lecture hall.

Multiple worldwide authorities have contributed to detailed and practical considerations pertaining to the management of a variety of clinical issues that continue to challenge neurologists and epileptologists.

The extensive text of 489 pages is divided into Diagnostic Issues and Therapeutic Challenges.

The Diagnostic Issues include discussions on the differential diagnosis of epilepsy; age-related diagnostic issues; the role of diagnostic tests in clinical epilepsy; identifying candidates for surgery, and diagnosis of associated behavioural disabilities. Within these categories are discussions related to seizures developing during sleep, seizures and syncope, the diagnosis of non-epileptic seizures, the diagnosis and treatment of seizures in the elderly, the rational diagnosis of genetic epilepsies, psychiatric issues, and many other relevant topics.

The second half of the book, which is devoted to Therapeutic Challenges, includes discussions on the initiation, and termination of treatment; refractory epilepsies; childhood epilepsy; prognosis in epilepsy; and treatment of epilepsy. Within these topics are discussions related to starting and stopping anti-epileptic drugs, over-treatment of epilepsy, pregnancy and epilepsy, cognitive deficits in epilepsy, common treatment errors, ketogenic diet, long-term prognosis, predicting surgical outcome in epilepsy, and a team approach to treating epilepsy.

In essence, the primary benefit that is derived from this compendium is the logical and practical resolution that is provided for many of the common and often difficult problems encountered by neurologists, neurosurgeons, and psychiatric practitioners who are dealing with clinical problems related to epilepsy. The authors indicate that this book is not meant to be a complete textbook of epilepsy but, rather, a practical guide to many epilepsy-related problems based on extensive, authoritative clinical experience. In this role, it succeeds admirably. In addition, comprehensive references support the recommendations of the editors and contributors.

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TEACHING ATLAS OF BRAIN IMAGING. By Nancy J Fischbein, William P. Dillon, A. James Barkovich. Published by Thieme. C\$180.60 approx.

This atlas is a compendium of 167 cases each representing a different disorder in which the intra-cranial contents are affected. In