

Book Reviews

Microsurgical Anatomy. Edited by Zhong Shizhen, Han Yongjian and Yen Wenchun. Pp. xi+473, illustrated. (Lancaster: MTP Press Ltd., 1985). Price £89.95.

I started to read this book with some feelings of condescension. Glossy, expensive Western texts may lead one to equate polished presentation with refinement and achievement in learning. The substance of this book is solid, with much original new work, aiming to evaluate anatomical factors that could be clarified to expand microsurgical technique. The book is given philosophical direction by its aim to produce better clinical results by a deeper practical understanding of the anatomy in the interface between histological morphology and gross anatomy.

The illustrations are of the "blackboard drawing" type and seem ordinary, even crude, until the accompanying text is carefully read in conjunction with them. They then powerfully reinforce the text.

I finished my reading of this text with a considerable sense of humility at the sustained effort that must have been required by so many people to do good work in difficult circumstances. Apart from the valuable scientific content, it has an even greater value. It serves to remind one that ideas cross boundaries, that isolation is not synonymous with intellectual sterility—quite the reverse.

C. R. RAYNER

Hand Trauma. By D. Buck-Gramcko, R. Hoffmann and R. Neumann. Pp. 176 with 213 illustrations and tables. (Stuttgart: Hippokrates-Verlag, 1986). Price DM 118.

This is an excellent book originally published in German and its translation into English has been achieved smoothly and comfortably. There is nothing lost in the translation nor is there anything that is second-hand.

The preface refers to the deliberate omission of a chapter dealing with insurance and compensation. Accepting that most countries have their own ways of dealing with the subject, I am sure that many hand surgeons would nevertheless have been interested in comment on a subject such as this which forms a significant part of most hand surgeons' work.

It is difficult to find any significant criticism other than to suggest that some reference to the absence or presence of sweating should have been included in examination of the hand for nerve injury.

The descriptions of operative techniques and other pre- and post-operative directions are excellent. These are written without ambiguity and provide concise, authoritative directions for virtually every common situation found in hand trauma.

The recurrent references to the consequences of poor management and the further emphasis on not only informed comment but on information to the patient throughout his management, are matters that do not receive attention in most other textbooks on the subject. The chapter on regional anaesthesia is particularly well written and obviously based on wide experience.

It is my pleasure to recommend this book strongly and if a Casualty Department was to have one book only dealing with hand trauma, this should be the choice.

J. COLVILLE

The Facial Nerve. By Mark May. Pp. xiv+819 with 560 figures (some in colour) and 81 tables. (Stuttgart, New York: Georg Thieme Verlag, 1986). Price DM 248.

This book is a multi-author text which presents in some 800 pages an in-depth review of the pathology and management of the facial nerve. It begins with applied basic science, progressing through clinical evaluation, patho-physiology, differential diagnosis, special tests and the treatment of specific disorders. The principal author has some 20 years' experience, managing some 1500 patients with facial nerve pathology, and has written chapters in each section of the book. Most of the other authors are ENT surgeons and therefore intra-temporal pathology features strongly. Those interested in the facial nerve will find it a comprehensive clinical source, particularly with regard to the basic sciences and disease entities causing paralysis. Most of these chapters are well written and thoroughly researched, although as with any multiple author publication, repetition is difficult to avoid. It is in the area of treatment of facial palsy where the plastic surgeon is perhaps particularly interested. The authors accept that there is no general consensus to support any one of the treatments for the disorders reported.

The chapters on hyperkinesia and blepharospasm are particularly interesting and well presented. As the reader proceeds through the chapters on treatment, however, there is little new. Eyelid springs are favoured and some nice techniques for their introduction suggested.

Interpositional nerve grafts are clearly popular and successful if carried out early. Experience with crossed facial nerve grafts are more doubtful, however, with only occasional successful outcome. The "old faithfuls" of temporalis and masseter transfer still have pride of place for the delayed reconstruction. The importance of putting these transfers in under considerable positive tension is emphasised. The authors are honest enough to criticise these techniques and present their weaknesses. Virtually no mention is made of the newer techniques of free muscle grafting with or without microvascular anastomosis. The preponderance of American authors may account for this and reflects the rather slow adoption of these techniques in the United States, possibly from fear of litigation. In volumes of this size and scholarship one seeks answers to the thorny problems that prove refractory to treatment such as epiphora. The authors favour partial resection of the lacrimal gland, which unfortunately does not seem to give particularly reliable results in practice. Nevertheless the authors clearly accept that many of these techniques are controversial and concepts are continually evolving. The book forms a useful reference volume providing a view of the subject from a slightly different angle for the plastic surgeon, and therefore is of considerable interest to those involved in the treatment of facial palsy.

D. H. HARRISON

Lifetime Care of the Paraplegic Patient. First edition. Edited by Sir George M. Redbrook. Pp. xiv+263 with 72 figures and 34 tables. (Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1985). Price £32.

Management of the paraplegic patient is described by specialists ranging from an administrator writing about vocational rehabilitation to microbiologists writing about prevention and management of infection.

This is hardly a book for the plastic surgeon—even one