

## Book Reviews

**THE SPINAL CORD INJURED PATIENT, COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT.** First Edition 1991. Edited by Bok Y. Lee, Lee E. Ostrander, George Van B. Cochran, and William W. Shaw. Published by W.B. Saunders Company, 339 pages.

The multidisciplinary approach developed by spinal injury treatment centres is reflected in the 29 chapters of this multi-authored text. Topics range from imaging techniques, management of instability, to longterm, nutritional requirements and medical complications.

The authors give an overall view of many aspects of care provided by both medical and non-medical sub-specialities. This includes excellent chapters on hemodynamic monitoring, urologic evaluation and renal insufficiency, reconstructive surgery for the upper limb and hand, and management of coping problems in spinal cord rehabilitation.

The book suffers, however, from the problems often associated with multi-authored text, particularly a tendency to repeat basic information in each chapter which cuts short scholarly discussion of the most topical and controversial issues. There is difficulty with organization of the chapters and a sense of flow from the acute phase of injury through to out-patient management was not developed. This shortcoming would make it difficult for students and residents to place some chapters in perspective. I was surprised at the absence of specific chapters dealing with the pathophysiology of spinal cord injuries, particularly with recent developments in pharmacologic treatment. Also absent was a chapter dealing with spasticity. The chapter on surgical stabilization did not include many of the new surgical techniques commonly used in most spinal injury centres.

As a neurosurgeon, I gained valuable information pertaining to those management problems more commonly dealt with by other specialities, however, I did not find the chapters dealing with acute management problems very insightful.

This book could be recommended to those who commonly treat patients with spinal cord injuries, have a strong basic library, and wish to supplement this with some specific excellent chapters.

*M.L. Long,  
Calgary, Alberta*

**NEUROPSYCHOLOGY AND THE DEMENTIAS.** Edition: 1st (cloth and paper). 1990. By Siobhan Hart and James M. Semple. Published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Ltd., 343 pages. \$66 Cdn. approx.

This book is an informative overview of the clinical, cognitive and neurobiological characteristics of the common dementing illnesses. It can be recommended to neurologists, speech pathologists, clinical and experimental neuropsychologists, geriatricians and pharmacologists who may wish a readable digest of the recent literature. The authors combine expertise in the clinical neuropsychology of dementia and neuropharmacology of cognition.

In Part I, the authors give brief explanations of the experimental, cognitive and clinical traditions within neuropsychology and also clarify the distinction between clinical psychology and clinical neuropsychology. On the whole, this is a useful section, but the cognitive neuropsychological approach is inadequately explicated. The use of information processing models, which are derived from cognitive psychology, and the introduction of computational network modelling in the last five years are not discussed. The importance of experimental single case studies is recognized and the authors rightly emphasize the need for an integrative approach across different disciplines to make progress in dementia research.

In Part II the authors discuss briefly the neuropathological basis of Alzheimer's, Pick's, Huntington's and Parkinson's Disease, Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease and Vascular and Alcoholic Dementia. Conspicuously absent from this list are some of the rare but important disease entities which have been recognized in the last few years, including Diffuse Lewy Body Disease, Cortical-Basal Ganglionic Degeneration, and especially Frontal Lobe Dementia of the non-Alzheimer type. The authors provide a succinct overview of the known neurotransmitter dysfunctions in different dementia sub-types with emphasis on Alzheimer's Disease. They do not discuss the controversy concerning the cholinergic hypothesis of Alzheimer's dementia; they simply summarize the clinical studies that have altered cholinergic function and indicate that some of these show promise. Like others, they point out the need for precise behavioural methods to assess the effects of any treatment interventions.

Part III highlights the main clinical features of different dementing illnesses and reviews the laboratory investigations available for differential diagnosis. In chapter 7, the role of neuroimaging techniques including CT, PET, SPECT and MRI is discussed. The potential for differentiating frontal and posterior patterns of dementia by PET or SPECT is not elaborated, however, and there is little mention of the importance of MRI in detecting vascular disease or of the ongoing controversy over the significance of white matter hyperintensities on MRI with respect to cognitive function in the elderly. A useful contribution of this chapter is the critique of current approaches to cognitive assessment in dementia including the different instruments used, the problem of estimation of premorbid intelligence and aspects of test development, such as content validity, construct validity, etc. The authors illustrate the deficiencies of many current assessment tools. They also stress the need to supplement quantitative psychometric assessment with detailed behavioural observation of the demented subject.

Part IV, summarizes experimental research on the main areas of cognitive function affected by dementing processes, with the exception of frontal lobe dysfunction, which is not discussed. The chapters on memory and language are the most detailed, since the majority of research efforts over the last two decades has been directed to these important functions. The section on language and communication is an insightful survey, reflecting the first author's own research experience. The chap-