

tion of experimental endolymphatic hydrops and its effect on the cells and their ultrastructure of the inner ear.

The classical approach of 'obstruction of absorption' developed by Kimura and Schuknecht in 1965 has been augmented by a pharmacologically induced model of 'excessive production' or overproduction of the endolymph, first described by Feldman and Brusilow in 1973 studying the effect of cholera toxin on the vascular stria. Dr Bentham has used Nimodipine for this purpose.

The classical method of blocking the endolymphatic duct or excising the endolymphatic sac with the subsequent development of endolymphatic hydrops, is followed after a period by degenerative changes in the cells of the endolymphatic duct and of the inner ear. In chapter 2 of the book the heterogeneity of the glycocalyx is described in the normal and in the hydropic cochlea of the guinea-pig. And chapter 3 considers the structure and composition of the often disputed stereociliary cross-links here confirmed.

The modern cytochemical methods employed would be of some assistance to any experimental worker in this field.

The object of the delicate pharmacological experiments was the stimulating effect of Nimodipine on the Na^+K^+ ATPase acting in the vascular stria, and of the cochlear potentials in the normal and hydropic cochlea of the guinea-pig.

It may be of interest to mention that Nimodipine is a compound first described as an Ltype Ca^{2+} channel antagonist. Subsequently it was discovered that it possesses a Na^+K^+ ATPase stimulating effect enhancing the function of the vascular stria. Endolymphatic hydrops may develop through an as yet unknown mechanism.

There was a moderate distension of Reissner's membrane after systemic treatment with Nimodipine because the overproduced endolymph could not be immediately absorbed. Furthermore the frequencies of the compound action potential had been lowered.

Both these findings suggest, in the author's opinion, that Nimodipine may cause overproduction of endolymph. It should, therefore, not be used in the treatment of tinnitus, in particular of patients with Meniere's disease.

There remain many questions to be answered, perhaps by another member of the Utrecht Group. This book is recommended reading for any worker aiming 'at a better understanding of the functional recovery of the inner ear following attacks of Menière's disease.

Imrich Friedmann.

THE EXPERT WITNESS

Jean Graham Hall and Gordon D. Smith.
Barry Rose Law Publishers Ltd: Chichester,
W. Sussex. 1992.

ISBN 1 872328 26 1. Price: £22.00.

This book is the product of a retired circuit judge and a char-

tered surveyor and is stated to be aimed 'to provide guidance and encouragement for the expert who is a newcomer to legal proceedings'. Doctors are advised that it is a book for *all* expert witnesses, not simply medical and surgical experts—but it will still be of value.

It begins with a brief historical review of the development and emergence of the expert witness. The expert is one who is engaged to express an opinion—albeit one based on the facts—and courts will decide whether the expert is to give evidence at all and, if so, what if any weight is to be attached to his opinions.

The book then provides a comprehensive review of the rules governing both civil and criminal cases, and explains some comparatively recent changes in statutes and rules. The emphasis is increasingly one of cards on the table, face up, with the intention of doing justice. No longer is it possible or permissible to play the cards close to the chest, engaging in ambush, playing legal war games—a matter about which much critical comment was made in the aftermath of the criminal case of R -v- Arthur.

The book provides a valuable combination of practical advice and guidance for experts and a thorough exposition of the relevant law and rules. Disclosure of documents and the preparation of the expert's statement is dealt with; the important point is made that the opinion of the expert must be the independent product of the expert. The expert is not an advocate for the cause, nor a 'hired mouth' but must bring to the case his own, independent analysis of all relevant facts and his own interpretation and opinion. The integrity of the expert is important if just decisions are to be reached.

Court proceedings are explained, as are the rules of evidence. A helpful explanation is given of the hearsay rule and of best evidence. The chapters on arbitration and on the function of the expert as an advocate (*e.g.* chartered surveyors in land tribunal inquiries) will be of less interest and still less importance to the medical and surgical expert. Provision exists for the court to appoint an expert, but only on the application of one of the parties to a suit.

Experts enjoy some immunity from litigation, but only in respect of the oral evidence which they give in court. They remain liable to litigation for all other work and would do well to remember that in volunteering to act as an expert they must exercise similar standards of skill and care which are applicable to their clinical work.

This book is well presented and printed, commendably concise and interspersed with a collection of quotations from antiquity to the present. All in all a useful book for those who intend to act as experts, as much a reference work for the shelf as a quick 'pre-trial read'.

R. N. Palmer.