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Neurology 4th Edition

This newly published fourth edition of the English version of the classic German neurology textbook aims, in the authors' own words, to be a comprehensive text of neurology for practising physicians, but also not to be too unwieldy, and readable for both study and reference. The book is an unusual size. It is too big for most people's white coat pockets, but not big enough to intimidate or inspire on the shelf; it may have been designed for the briefcase. Overall we thought it was a little (or medium sized) gem, we highly recommend it, and any minor gripes are a reflection of how much we have used it rather than any real concerns about content.

We read through the book and then delved into it to look up current problems on the ward. We then had to decide where it would live: the bin, the hospital library, the desktop, or the briefcase.

It is subdivided into 15 sections covering a broad range of neurological subjects in both adult and paediatric neurology. On the whole, it achieves its aim of being comprehensive, and readers looking for more detailed material can consult the reference list provided.

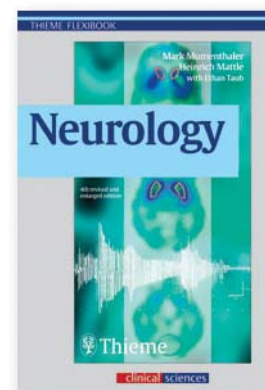
The read through was fun; the 438 illustrations and 210 tables make for quick and easy reference and there are many excellent neuroimaging studies of various modalities. The chapter on dementing disorders and neuropsychology, and the chapter on disturbances of cerebral perfusion were superb with a helpful mix of microscopic and telescopic perspectives. We were impressed by the space given to syncope and other disorders which mimic epileptic seizures. Epilepsy and anti epileptic drugs are classified in useful tables although the discussion about teratogenicity is very short and does not appear in the otherwise

helpful list of ten principles for the treatment of patients with epilepsy. Perhaps a subsection should be added dealing with the particular problems of epilepsy in women. Having the references available on line makes for a much more concise book and the scales and genetics in the appendix are a useful reference tool. At times the formatting of the text could be easier on the eye (if the formatting of the British National Formulary can make drug information readable, anything is possible) but that may be an inevitable problem in a book of this size. There are a few errors, for example on page 9, in diagram g, 'coccygeal' is spelt 'kokzygeal', and on page 76, fig.2.13 a/b the labels remain in German. On page 35, table 2.5, the phrase 'feeble mindedness' may be more appropriately replaced by 'learning disability', and on page 41 it is stated that a large head in a neonate often reflects familial 'microcephaly', which should surely be 'macrocephaly'.

Specific problems we looked up included the diagnosis and treatment of autonomic dysreflexia in patients with spinal cord injury, Lambert Eaton Myaesthetic syndrome (LEMS), and the anatomy of the cerebral venous sinuses. Autonomic dysreflexia is not mentioned by name but paroxysmal hypertension is described in ten lines and the management is not discussed. As this is one of the common life threatening problems after spinal cord injury this was a surprise. LEMS is described well and the description of the anatomy of the venous sinuses was just what we wanted. Two out of three; not bad.

It's in the briefcase.

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Mark Mumenthaler,
Heinrich Mattle with Ethan Taub
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The Neuropathology of Dementia

Everything about this second edition is bigger than the first (of 1997): editors (3 vs. 2); chapters (24 vs. 19); pages (578 vs. 440; cf. blurb: "this new edition is almost twice the size of its predecessor"; might possibly refer to word count?); contributors (45 vs. 19); and price (£195 vs. £75): hence the greatest proportionate increase, regrettably, is in the latter.

The opening chapters deal with general issues such as the definition of dementia, brain anatomy, safety precautions, and the practical approach to neuropathological diagnosis. The latter is especially good in tackling thorny diagnostic issues such as mixed pathology, mild pathology appropriate to age, no pathology to account for a clinical diagnosis of dementia, and pathology typical of a dementia syndrome in the absence of a clinical diagnosis. Chapters devoted to the molecular diagnosis of dementia and to neuroimaging in Alzheimer's disease may surprise (could one imagine neuropathology chapters in textbooks devoted to the neurogenetics or neuroimaging of dementia?) but reflect the inclusiveness of the approach to information gathering taken by neuropathologists which should sit well with clinicians.

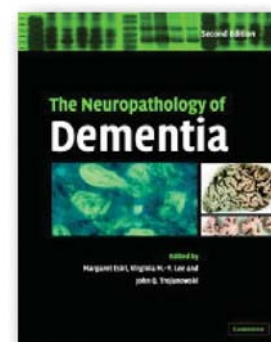
Of the fifteen chapters dealing with specific clinicopathological entities, appropriately the longest is devoted to Alzheimer's disease, approximately one third of which reviews the pathogenesis of this most prevalent dementia syndrome (the final chapter on transgenic mouse models

of neurodegenerative disease also addresses this concern with pathogenesis). However, as clinicians we were disappointed to find little on the neuropathological heterogeneity associated with presenilin mutations (for example, there is no mention of cotton wool plaques), a situation which contrasts with the chapter discussing the hereditary tauopathies.

It is difficult to think of particular omissions: vascular dementia, prion disease, Parkinson's disease and dementia with Lewy bodies, frontotemporal dementias, Huntington's disease, multiple sclerosis, head injury, alcohol-related cognitive decline are amongst the topics covered, though from a clinical perspective there is no specific discussion of primary progressive aphasia and semantic dementia. If you are seeking an account of progressive subcortical gliosis of Neumann the index will not help you (try 261; also 168). There are few references dated later than 2002 which presumably reflects a long gestation period. Hence, the E46K α -synuclein mutation is not mentioned (Zarranz et al., *Ann. Neurol* 2004; 55: 164-73).

Verdict: obviously a must for neuropathologists with an interest in dementia; highly desirable (if budgets allow) for clinicians with an interest; and a possible for the departmental library.

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M Esiri, VMY Lee,
JQ Trojanowski (eds.)
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University Press 2004 (2nd edition)
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