

will be equally limited. Future computer-based systems will provide ready access to more recent reviews and references with more powerful search and retrieval capabilities than any textbook can offer. Shortly after that, textbooks such as this will come to occupy the same niche in scientific history as does the slide rule. Interestingly, *Internal Medicine* can be purchased on compact disk read-only memory. The main difference between the book and the compact disk is that the latter has a search and retrieval function that is likely far superior to even the best indexing-scanning skills. Given the seemingly authoritative set of authors and editors responsible for *Internal Medicine*, bypassing the textbook and going straight for the compact disk read-only memory might be the best way to stay current in the information technology race.

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**An Introduction to Clinical
Neurology:
Pathophysiology,
Diagnosis, and Treatment**

by Alan Guberman, 610 pp, ISBN
0-316-33073-6, Boston, Mass, Little
Brown & Co Inc, 1994.

This very well-written introductory text is intended for medical stu-

dents and paramedical personnel. Its strengths lie in the clear discussion of the approach to the evaluation of neurological disease. The sections dealing with the presentation of patients are lucid, concise, and a highlight of the book.

The preface says it is also intended for postgraduate trainees and nonneurologist practicing physicians. It will probably fall short of meeting the needs of the latter group because it is weak in discussing management issues and in serving as a reference. Much of what residents and practitioners need involves dealing with illness that does not conform to "textbook" descriptions. Students need relatively simple explanations and emphasis on diagnosis. Residents and practitioners know most of this information and usually need more information about the exceptions rather than the rules.

The first chapter deals with diagnosis and decision making. It is simply written and suggests an organized approach to neurological diagnosis that is helpful. It points out that making the diagnosis does not always result in meaningful success in treatment; however, it fails to acknowledge the need to manage patients at times without a clear-cut diagnosis. One sometimes has to decide if diagnostic steps are worth their costs. This emphasis on diagnosis is indicative of the usual approach taken with medical students rather than a reflection of the reality of the nonneurologist's clinical practice.

The following chapters deal with history taking, examination,

and tests. The remainder of the book deals with specific neurological conditions in chapters organized predictably, eg, "Parkinson's Disease" or "Neuroophthalmology." There is a chapter dealing with inherited metabolic and developmental disorders, including myelomeningocele and neurofibromatosis, but pediatric neurological problems are not covered with the depth necessary for the physician caring for children.

The organization of material in the book is not entirely satisfactory. Information about such topics as herpes zoster and electromyography is spread out through several chapters, and even then the information located falls short of all that should be provided.

The etiology and pathophysiology of Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis, and most other major neurological conditions, are given excellent coverage.

The book has visual appeal (graphics, layout, and photographs) and the tables and references support the text well. The reader may find additional neuro-anatomic learning materials helpful.

Overall, the strengths of this softcover book outweigh its weaknesses. Its readability makes it easy to recommend, provided its limitations are noted. Medical students especially will find it most helpful.

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