



## BOOK REVIEWS

### Color Atlas of Neurology

By Reinhard Rohkamm. Pp. 440. Illustrated. EUR(D)39,95/CHF67. Thieme Verlagsgruppe. 2004. ISBN 1-58890-191-2. (Available from SAMA-HMPG. Price R425, members R405.)

The author is professor and director of the neurological clinic at Sandebusch Hospital, Sande, Germany. He acknowledges the assistance of his clinical and radiological colleagues and of the well-known medical illustrator, Frank Netter, in the production of the book.

His little neurology text has some important strengths, of which the most obvious is its pocketability. This is attributable to a tightly written text that is logically separated into 5 sections, all of which are very well indexed. These cover 'Fundamentals' (the organisation of the nervous system), 'Normal and Abnormal Function of the Nervous System' (dealing with neuro-anatomy and neurophysiology), 'Neurological Syndromes' (such as headache, CNS infections, etc.), 'Diagnostic Evaluation' and an appendix of references and tables, the latter dealing with neurological tests and their characteristic results, aetiology, common pathogens, etc., and enlarging the text – such as a table covering the clinical spectrum of the Guillain-Barré syndrome.

The illustrations are superb, each page of text accompanied by a page of illustrations that encapsulate the text in highly memorable format. Complicated syndromes such as the encephalopathies and the peripheral neuropathies are handily sub-classified and succinctly described in terms of pathogenesis and clinical manifestations, nuances also captured in a single phrase. The reader is referred to tables in the appendix for the archetypical diagnostic features and treatment is covered in broad outline.

I have some minor quibbles and found some sections disappointing, notably the section on stroke which seemed to take a rather pedestrian and old-fashioned approach to an entity which is now treated as a medical emergency, following insights into the parallels which may be drawn between TIAs and completed stroke and angina and completed myocardial infarction. While the manner in which management has been revolutionised is hinted at, it is not emphasised strongly enough (and the use of aspirin in the acute situation and in secondary prevention, for which there is convincing evidence-base, is similarly not stressed) – important since stroke is the third largest killer.

The book aims to fulfil the requirements of medical students and trainee specialists and it certainly achieves this. I believe that the book also serves as a ready reference for the qualified

generalist or specialist practitioner handling a patient with a neurological problem. With some negotiation around the book, following the leads offered in the text and studying the illustrations, the reader can achieve a surprisingly extensive overview of any entity.

Janet Seggie

### Principles of Surgical Patient Care

Second edition. Edited by Carel J Mieny and Ulrich Mennen. Pp. xv + 1102. R699. New Africa Books (Pty) Ltd. 2003. ISBN 1-86928-005-9. (Available from SAMA/HMPG. Price R699, members R660.)

The new edition of *Principles of Surgical Patient Care* by Mieny and Mennen is a significant improvement on the previous edition, both in its content and presentation.

This book has been, and continues to be, the text of choice for postgraduate surgical trainees. As the title implies, the topics in the book cover the principles of surgical care, which would apply not only to general surgery, but also to other surgical disciplines. This book is therefore essential for any postgraduate student in the surgical disciplines.

*Principles of Surgical Patient Care* is the recommended text for the intermediate examinations of the College of Medicine of South Africa and for the intermediate component of the Masters in Surgery (MMed) degree. The popularity of this book among surgical trainees has spread beyond the borders of this country, and it is being widely used in many English-speaking countries.

There have been many significant advances and changes in surgical principles, especially in intensive care, trauma and the understanding of the pathophysiology of surgical problems. The second edition has been updated and reflects current understanding and management of surgical diseases. Each chapter is written by experts in the field, and although styles do vary, there is uniformity in the presentation.

The previous edition came in two volumes. The current edition is a single volume which, in my opinion, is an improvement even though it appears to be slightly bulky.

This book is absolutely essential for all surgical trainees in all surgical disciplines intending to write the intermediate examinations on the principles of surgery. It is also useful for examiners and trainers involved in the teaching and examination of the principles of surgical care. It is also useful as a reference text for undergraduate medical students and dental students who have to study principles of surgical care.

Del Kahn

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