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Books received

Neurologie et neuroradiologie infantile : maladie du cerveau et du crâne
C Diebler and O Dulac (1990) 454 pp., 2 195 figs. Springer Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York. ISBN 2-287-00030-5

This book by Claus Diebler and Olivier Dulac is the French version of their work on the same subject published 3 years ago. It is divided into several chapters comprising all forms of cerebral pathology: malformative, metabolic, infectious, vascular, tumoral (including the neurocutaneous syndromes) and traumatic. The definitive advantage of this book is its concision, its clarity and the fact that it includes in one work both the clinical and the radiologic data. It is the bringing together of these two disciplines that makes this work so important by establishing the indispensable link in the study of these diseases: by showing the pediatrician what to expect from imaging techniques, and the radiologist what the clinical signs suggest that he should look for with the techniques at his disposal and which to employ preferentially. Each disorder is treated very precisely and profusely illustrated by CT, MRI, myelography and arteriography. The poor quality of some of the CT images is regrettable, and so is the sometimes inadequate space allotted to magnetic resonance imaging. The chief defect is that this second edition of such an ambitious work, previously so satisfying in its first English edition, has a poor bibliography and one that is not updated in certain fields, mainly as regards pediatric vascular pathology. The most recent data on vascular lesions (tumoral and malformative) are not reported and discussed and the text suffers from this lack of modernisation. Again, it is unfortunate that the chapter devoted to the acquired immune deficiency syndrome is limited to half a page despite the importance of the subject. The avowed aim of "updating the literature" does not seem to have been totally achieved. These criticisms should not obscure the global merits of this book. It is precise, well-documented and didactic and reflects the great personal experience of the authors. It constitutes a French work of reference that can be recommended to pediatricians, neurologists, radiologists or neurosurgeons and others interested in cerebral pediatric pathology.

G Rodesch

Anatomical dissections for use in neurosurgery (Vols. 1 and 2)
W Seeger (1987) 313 pp, 150 figs. Springer Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, ISBN 3-211-81998-3

What is initially striking in this work is the quality of the anatomic drawings. A closer study goes beyond the artistic aspect of the book since the anatomic variations, different landmarks and precise measurements render it a work of reference in practical topographic anatomy useful to both anatomist and neurosurgeon.

The first volume deals with the dissection of the encephalon. The study of the deep structures of the center of the cerebrum and of the posterior fossa based on surgical experience is particularly valuable. The clear three-dimensional representation from different angles of the ventricular system, the central gray nuclei or the cerebellum provide the information required in defining operative strategy. The study of the arteries is very important for aneurysmal surgery.

The second volume contrasts the anatomic structures with the MRI findings, and may be even more useful for the neuroradiologist. The many sections are well defined and performed in great detail and integrated into three-dimensional representation. Certain points are dealt with and discussed separately for difficult cases or cases of special interest.

JL Berthelot

Anatomy and surgery of the cavernous sinus
VV Dolenc (1989) 344 pp, 182 figs. Springer Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, ISBN 3-211-82155-4

This volume is a sequel to "The Cavernous Sinus", a multidisciplinary work edited by the author in 1987. This time it is a personal book which reviews and reflects the universally recognised experience of the author, even though others have previously carried out much work on the cavernous sinus.

This very fine book of 344 pages is above all else an atlas of anatomical views and operative photographs, all in color, and each accompanied by an explanatory text. The text appears in fact to be supplementary, preceding each chapter, but is sufficiently detailed for the reader to follow the author's exposition and his philosophy on the subject.

The book is divided into three main parts: the first details the anatomy of the neurovascular triangle, described by the author from fresh cadavers with injected vessels. The second deals with the surgical approach, and the third with the pathology of aneurysms (intracavernous, carotid-ophthalmic, basilar), meningiomas, and traumatic vascular lesions (aneurysms and carotico-cavernous fistulae).

In this book the cavernous sinus is considered in a wide sense, so that the lesions which affect it broadly concern neighboring structures such as the petrous apex, the clivus, and the middle cranial fossa.

Some criticism can be made of this book, in my opinion, each page of which requires sustained attention in order to understand the views and diagrams of the author, presented as they are from a variety of angles.

For someone who cannot be a specialist in the cavernous sinus it is difficult to understand the aim of the anatomical triangles described by the author, without first having understood the principle of the surgical approach, which in fact requires one to read the second part of the book. In addition the abbrevations in the figures are tiring to follow in diagrams and photographs, necessitating frequent return to the explanatory page at the beginning of the book.

Finally a more general, but fundamental, criticism is the absence of details of outcome of the operated cases and, with this, the lack of reference to the place this surgery has as opposed to the increasing use of interventional radiology and multiple field radiotherapy. Indeed this surgery is known to have a marked morbidity and a high level of recurrence of tumors, and if this surgery is to be feasible in the future it is to the credit of the author to have shown the way didactically and brilliantly in this book. The real place of surgery remains a matter of controversy, particularly for vascular lesions where interventional radiology seems to be taking over.

But, aside from these criticisms, this book is admirable for the quality of the anatomical and operative illustrations in color, is of fundamental interest, contributing to the surgery of the subject.

It is recommended to all those who are interested in the base of the skull, to the anatomist, and to the neurosurgeon and neuroradiologist.

M Djindjian