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BOOK REVIEW

Epilepsy surgery. 2nd Edition (Eds H. O. Luders & Y. G. Comair). Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2001. 1060 pp. Philadelphia, PA: ISBN 0-7817-14427

This textbook of Epilepsy Surgery is the 2nd edition of a book originally published in 1992. As the preface acknowledges, great advances in this very important field necessitated a considerably updated and re-written book. Over the last 8 years many neuroscience centres have embarked upon an epilepsy surgery programme and more will no doubt follow their example. The expansion creates a great need for such a book, which will provide a solid ground on which a surgery programme can be built. This volume lives up to the expectations.

This is a single volume book, on 1060 pages, in 18 parts (108 chapters) and seven further chapters in an Appendix. It is a well written, well presented and in most parts well illustrated book.

After the 'Honoured Guest Lecture' by Eli S. Goldensohn on the Cellular Electrical Phenomena in Focal Epilepsy, predominantly offering a historical overview of the subject, there are a further four chapters on the history of epilepsy surgery. Such historical reviews create a welcome bridge between the pioneers of the past and the enthusiasts of today.

The second part, with the title 'Overview', deals with the definition of intractability, epidemiology and the ethical and economical considerations of an epilepsy surgery programme. In the current medico-legal climate and in the era of managed health care and increased financial accountability these aspects could not have been ignored. Those who hope to set up a new epilepsy surgery programme will find useful information here in their dialogue with the purchasers of the service.

The next part of the book outlines the targets for surgical treatment. The epilepsy syndromes suitable for surgical management are dealt with in separate chapters. A good general overview is given of mesial temporal lobe sclerosis but separate chapters deal with neo-cortical temporal lobe epilepsy, lateral and mesial frontal lobe epilepsy and parieto-occipital epilepsy. Rasmussen's Syndrome and other indications for hemispherectomy and the chapter on possible surgical options for Lennox Gastaut Syndrome further broaden the horizon. As elsewhere in this book, there is a separate paediatric chapter, here describing the surgical treatment of epilepsy in infants.

After two chapters on general considerations of pre-operative evaluation there are five chapters on structural and six on functional neuro-imaging. These are arguably the most important chapters of this book given the dramatic developments in the field on neuroradiology over the last decade. The quality of illustrations is vital for the imaging aspects of evaluation and in this respect the book is adequate. This reviewer would have liked even more of the illustrative material in this part. In addition, for cost curtailment purposes the colour illustrations were bound together, away from their context. A final chapter in this part outlines the future of neuro-imaging as seen by the authors. One found it curious that magneto-encephalography, dealt with in the neurophysiological part of the book, was not seemingly integrated into this future.

The next part, on intensive monitoring, is heavily weighted to discuss the technological developments and automation in this field. This is very welcome, even if these chapters will be tested by the rapid developments in the near future. The next part, on non-invasive neurophysiological investigations, is strikingly short compared with the space devoted to neuro-imaging. This represents the current practice and future trend. A thoughtful chapter analyses the limitations of non-invasive electro-encephalographic evaluation. Much more emphasis is given (eight chapters) to neuropsychological and neuropsychiatric evaluation. One would not criticise the emphasis but in this part there appears to be more overlap between chapters than elsewhere. Similar criticism may be raised regarding the four chapters on the Sodium Amobarbital test.

After the essential chapter on the patient management conference, vital for any epilepsy surgery programme, seven chapters analysed the role of various invasive electro-encephalographic methods.

Next in the book is the part on surgery. After a general introduction on anaesthesia and electrocor-

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ticography, separate chapters deal with the different surgical approaches. As these are on the whole defined by the site of focus and epileptic syndromes, the introduction of most of these chapters overlap with those already mentioned. I would have liked to see in a volume of this size more detailed description of surgery with more emphasis on illustrations. This is so, even if one would not expect the reader to carry out these procedures taking guidance merely from a book. A brief chapter on experimental techniques such as Stereotactic Radiosurgery would have been useful though it was welcome to see Vagus Nerve Stimulation have its own chapter.

Outcome of surgery is allowed to be embedded in the individual surgical chapters but six chapters are devoted to the psychosocial, neuropsychological and other aspects. Analysis of neuropathology is helpful and it is well covered in this volume. Analysis of post-surgical management including that of surgical failures is welcome. Three chapters on controversies round up the volume though there are a further seven chapters in an Appendix. These are well written additions, but they appear like an afterthought. As they would have fitted in well within the general structure of the book, I did not see the rational behind placing them in an Appendix.

Overall this is a very readable and useful book. I recommend it not only to those neurologists and neurosurgeons who are in the beginning of their epilepsy surgery programme or are about to set one up but also to those with established epilepsy surgery practice.

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