

no explanatory text would have difficulty in understanding it. Equally, I found a completely new system of numbering diseases based on the chapter number unnecessarily confusing. Metabolic disease has its own jargon and abbreviations, more are not required.

It is important that metabolic disease is considered as part of differential diagnosis but I doubt whether its investigation could be effectively done using this book alone. Surely the laboratory has a role to play. The tests are usually performed in specialist centres that not only do the analysis but offer interpretation and can put the general clinician in touch with the appropriate expert.

This book is not for reading and it fails in my opinion to reach its target audience. Perhaps it would have been better to drop the first word of the title. Nevertheless, it contains a lot of useful information much of which is not easily found in other text books or sources. It could sit comfortably on a shelf next to *The Metabolic and Molecular Bases of Inherited Disease* in a library or in the specialist paediatrician's office, and even the general laboratory.

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**Greenfield's Neuropathology.** 6th edn. Graham D, Lantos P, eds. (2 volumes; £345.00.) Arnold. 1996. ISBN 0 3405 9809 3.

You don't need to get as far as page 1 to realise that the sixth edition of *Greenfield* is the result of a major overhaul, and is essentially a new book. Gone is the short fat, unwieldy volume that very quickly got separated from its covers; the book is now in two manageable volumes in larger format, each around 1000 pages long. The silver print on the outside announces completely new chapters: "schizophrenia", "prion diseases", "movement disorders", and, most notably, "tumours" (previously excluded because they were dealt with in the companion volume by

Russell and Rubinstein, from the same publishers). Inside, the list of contributors is impressive: well over half the 64 names are those of overseas authors, many of them leading names in their field, many of them clinicians. About a third of the chapters are completely new; all have been extensively rewritten.

So how can one do justice to such a book in 500 words? In brief: it is brilliant. No longer merely an anthology of macroscopic and microscopic morbid anatomy, the book aims to set classic descriptive neuropathology within the framework of molecular and cellular events. As a result, this edition has a much wider appeal than earlier ones. Neurosurgeons and neurologists will find it an invaluable reference work, while for neuroradiologists—whose imaging techniques have made them into neuropathologists, whether they like it or not—it should be required reading. I found the most successful chapters to be those that integrated normal anatomy, physiology, and cellular pathology with clinical information and neuropathology. Special mention must go to the masterly discussion of modern concepts of rising intracranial pressure, brain swelling and oedema in the chapter by Miller and Ironside; the timely update on the pathophysiology of traumatic brain injury by Graham and Gennarelli; the chapter on hypoxia, which includes an excellent account of events in hypoglycaemia, by Auer and Benveniste; and the clear and succinct discussion of malformations by Harding and Copp.

However, such selection is invidious. Almost all the contributions are of exceptionally high quality, and the information is as up to date as is possible in a large textbook such as this. What reservations do I have? A few, centring on the wisdom of including tumours. There are already a number of excellent texts on the subject, and the long chapter by Lantos and colleagues falls short of being useful as a reference work for surgical neuropathology.

However, where the authors are not dealing with macroscopic and microscopic pathology of the tumours, as in the sections on molecular biology and cytogenetics, and in their long discussions of oligodendrogliomas and meningiomas, they give us much valuable information unobtainable elsewhere.

In summary, I really cannot fault this new edition. It has regained its place as the leading textbook of neuropathology, and should be in the libraries of the histopathology and neurosciences departments of every teaching hospital. It is unfortunate that the huge pricetag will prevent it from being part of many personal collections.

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## Correction

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*Benefits and limitations of pathology databases to cancer registries [letter].* J Clin Pathol 1997;50:354.

Square root symbols were inadvertently omitted from three places in this letter. The second paragraph should have read:

On closer examination, it is evident that the authors intended to use the simplest method for calculating a confidence interval for a proportion,  $p = r/n$ , viz.

$p \pm z \sqrt{p(1-p)/n}$  where  $z = 1.96$  for a 95% interval. In fact they have failed to take the  $n$  appearing in the denominator inside the square root, with the result that the intervals are narrower than intended, by a factor  $\sqrt{n}$ , which can be large.

The equation in the fourth paragraph should have read:

$(2np + z^2 \pm z \sqrt{z^2 + 4np(1-p)}) / (2(n + z^2))$   
These errors are regretted.