**Book Reviews**


The volume contains the proceedings of a colloquium that took place in Hamburg-Eppendorf/Germany on 24. October 1970. It deals with recent experiences with anaesthesia using β-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) and the ethylester of this substance (GHB-E). The book is written in German but contains an English summary.

FRAHM reported on pharmacological experiments on mice and guinea pigs that established GHB-E as being a more effective hypnotic than GHB and as having certain analgesic properties. BUSHART analyzed electrophysiological and clinical neurological findings in anaesthesia with GHB on 5 human volunteers. He concluded from EEG patterns and clinical observations that GHB does not cause natural sleep but genuine anaesthesia. The brain stem reticular formation does not seem to be inhibited. He claims the need for premedication (atropine, phenothiazine) to prevent crises of the autonomic nervous system. BESSERT, JANETZ, WILZ, GOLZ, GÜRTNER, HUSSMANN, SCHUSTER and KLAUCKE gave accounts of their clinical experience with anaesthesia using GHB under different conditions in their individual fields. Although the book mainly discusses the clinical use of GHB as an anaesthetic some remarks are made on the mechanism of action which could be different from the mechanism of conventional anaesthetics.

H. L. HAAS, Cambridge


This volume comprises a collection of 43 original papers presented at a symposium, held May, 1971, in Washington, D.C., USA. The pathophysiology of hydrocephalus has received increasing attention in recent years since the description of normal pressure hydrocephalus. This condition, characterized in large by a progressive dementia accompanied by motor signs, has been shown to be reversible by shunting procedures. A lot of the contributors deals with this syndrome, and an approach is made for better insight and more accurate diagnosis. Hydrocephalus, whatever its cause, is basically a mechanical problem of a disturbed balance between the different compartments within the skull. Air encephalography and, with increasing importance, cisternography are the most valuable methods for the demonstration and differentiation of the various types of this disturbance. The latter procedure has the advantage of reflecting the dynamics of cerebrospinal fluid flow, and, possibly in the future, allowing a quantitative approach to the flow pattern.

According to the different topics, the contributions are grouped in five parts:

- Physiology of CSF circulation and experimental hydrocephalus
- Instrumentation, radiopharmaceuticals, methodology
- Clinical: adult
- Clinical: children
- Quantitative cisternography

The book provides a general view on current theories and clinical aspects. However, this type of presentation, with its inherent divergence of subjects and opinions on the one hand and with many overlaps on the other hand, may be rather troublesome for the reader, who can easily get lost in details and controversies. In this respect, some conclusive remarks of the editors would have been useful.

G. F. ROHRER, Basel