

In summary, this book should have a place in the office of all who practice pediatric neurology and epileptology.

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VASCULAR DEMENTIA. 1994. Edited by L.A. Carlson, D.G. Gottfries and B. Winblad. Published by S. Karger AG. 214 pages. \$CDN 152.00.

Few diseases have undergone so many changes in fashion as vascular dementia. When Alzheimer made his classical observations at the turn of the century, degenerative brain disease was felt to be rare, even by Alzheimer himself. The idea that the brain was slowly and chronically deprived of blood by progressive atherosclerosis was only slowly surrendered in the 1950's, mainly by pathological observations of the brains of cohorts of demented patients that revealed the relationship between progressive brain degeneration with age. Now it is clear that the concept of "vascular dementia" is also degenerating, though the entity represents about 20% of demented populations.

This book is the product of a symposium which took place in Stockholm in August 1993, and as such suffers the drawbacks of all such non-peer reviewed publications. It is a brief book of scarcely

200 pages. The 13 chapters are also brief, rarely more than a few pages and over half are by Swedish authors. I found the most readable were the early chapters giving personal overviews. Most of the others were highly specialized and of variable interest, spanning small print neurochemistry to disturbances of gait. One wonders about the value of bureaucratic classification and subgrouping of a subject as diffuse as dementia and the value to either the clinician or researcher of concepts such as "strategic-infarct-syndromes". The European habit of acronyms often inhibits the fluency of reading, especially when different authors use different abbreviations for the same entity. Also, the tendency of some authors to confirm their observations by referring to their own previous publications is disconcerting.

I am not sure whom to recommend published symposia such as this. It is certainly not for the tyro wishing to learn the rudiments of vascular dementia; yet there is no constant theme in the book, so that the super specialist would only find one or two chapters of direct interest. The overviews on clinical concepts or neuro-imaging can be found in the authors original publications, most likely this publication will only have a passing interest for a limited and very specialised audience, who also are prepared to pay over \$100 for a very slim volume.

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