BOOK REVIEW

Title: ELECTRICAL STIMULATION & NEUROMUSCULAR DISORDERS
Editor: W. A. Nix and G. Vrbova
Price: DM98 Hard cover 147 pages 56 figures 9 Tables ISBN 3 540 16700 5

This beautifully produced book has a mere 147 pages including the index and boasts 56 figures and 9 tables. The editors, Nix and Vrbova, are eminent in the field of neuromuscular plasticity and have gathered a formidable list of contributors whose offerings serve to set out the scientific basis for the use of different forms of electrical stimulation in neuromuscular diseases. The book is divided into three parts:

Part I — The effects of nerves on muscle
Part II — Repair processes in the peripheral nervous system
Part III — Muscle plasticity in disease

The first part will serve as a refresher for the physiology concerning the diversity of motor units and the influence of innervation on muscle properties. The second part deals with the role of chronic electrical stimulation in determining the contractile properties of muscles and pointing out beneficial effects, e.g. increased capillarisation, protein synthesis and the maintenance of various functional and phenotype-specific functions, without glossing over some of the difficulties in the use of chronic electrical stimulation as a therapeutic tool. The third part concerns the effects of stimulation on disease and will be familiar to those physiotherapists who know of other work in this field, e.g. Diane Farragher and Geoffrey Kidd at Liverpool concerning facial palsy.

I found it a very stimulating book which filled gaps in my knowledge by explaining simply some complex findings. The book has satisfied the authors’ aim of showing that “bringing people together from different disciplines in science and medicine can initiate valuable discussion.” Physiotherapists should be particularly pleased as there is a basis being provided for the treatments that they are giving. It is necessary now for them to be among the designers of new experiments for the development of better therapeutic techniques. A must for the Library but might be too pricey for individuals.

J. A. Fowler