

Brain Edema XII

T. Kuroiwa, A. Baethmann, Z. Czernicki, J. T. Hoff, U. Ito, Y. Katayama, A. Marmorou, A. D. Mendelow, and H.-J. Reulen, eds. New York: Springer-Verlag; 2003. 609 pages, \$198.

It is a feature of medicine that comparatively small but interesting or difficult topics develop a life of their own with meetings and journals confined to that topic. This book is a compilation of papers presented at the 12th International Symposium on Brain Edema and Brain Tissue Injury, held in Hakone, Japan, in 2002, and has been organized by nine members of the conference committee.

This hardback tome is organized into thirteen subdivisions, which include sections that might not be expected, such as spinal cord trauma and subarachnoid hemorrhage. My overall impression of the book was not favorable, because I believe it suffers from nearly all of the problems associated with trying to make an informative and interesting work by merely binding extended abstracts together.

The first section (General Review) highlights the volume's lack of depth. I expected to read a reasonably detailed overview of the five topics (hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy, traumatic brain edema, intracranial hemorrhage, hydrostatic brain edema, and noninvasive imaging), as well as a historical perspective on the Vogts. Instead, they were short papers written with introduction, methods, and discussion sections rather than overviews. None of them goes into sufficient detail for the expert in the field, and all are too detached to be of value to the interested outsider.

The imaging section is next, although many of the papers presented elsewhere also contain imaging components. Three of the presentations in this section are experimental studies on subprimate mammals, three studies involve humans, and two "corporate" presentations. The latter two consist of state-of-the-art techniques (optical topography and MR imaging), and I hope that the oral presentations by the manufacturers are useful, because the written papers are a waste of space.

And so the book goes. One is left dissatisfied by the brevity and lack of coherence of the chapters. The one or two interesting chapters that are present are in the laboratory-based works rather than imaging papers.

Would I buy the book? Certainly not, and I would

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not advise my library to buy it either. Books that reprint conference proceedings try and largely fail as reference books, because there is no good way to find the subject of interest quickly. (Note that the index includes the following headings for diffusion-weighted imaging: "Diffusion," "Diffusion Co-efficient," "Diffusion Image," "Diffusion MR Imaging," "Diffusion Weighted," "Diffusion-Weighted Image," and "Diffusion-Weighted Imaging.") This is further evidence of the lack of thought and attention to detail that has gone into producing the book.

My advice? If you are interested in this field, go to the 2005 meeting in Ann Arbor instead of buying the book.