



Book Review

□ **Vestibular Autonomic Regulation.** Edited by Bill J. Yates and Alan D. Miller. 266 pages. Boca Raton, Florida; CRC Press, 1996.

This is an interesting volume of 254 pages. Its main purpose is to explore the link between peripheral and central vestibular mechanisms and the autonomic nervous system. It is multi-authored. As will be brought out below, this results in different levels of clarity and ease of understanding. All the chapters are heavily referenced with many 1994 and 1995 references. There is considerable redundancy in descriptions of the anatomy and physiology of the autonomic nervous system. The last chapter deals largely with clinical disorders of the autonomic nervous system and does not fit into the overall scheme of the volume. Each chapter has a table of contents and has the same organizational framework. Most have a list of abbreviations—very important considering the large number of abbreviations used. Illustrations, done on the text pages, were of high quality and were very helpful.

I liked the chapter by Schor and Tomko on the vestibular system. It is an excellent review, particularly useful for the nonvestibular specialist. One minor complaint—the semicircular canals are not perpendicular to each other and are not coplanar with ones on the opposite side of the head. Perhaps I'm sensitive on this point, having participated in work showing their lack of perpendicularity and how this contributes to convergence of information to CNS. Figure 1 in this chapter shows a wonderful anatomical dissection of the human ear and temporal bone. It should be in color.

The chapter on the autonomic nervous system structure and function by Sved and Ruggiero was also excellent. However, it had many, many abbreviations and no list of abbreviations.

This made it difficult for the reader to understand one section (for example, "Projections from the NTS" [nucleus tractus solitarius]) without pouring over the previous sections trying to find translations of given abbreviations. The illustrations were numerous and excellent.

The chapter dealing with relation of otolith-sympathetic relations and orthostatic hypotension by Yates is very good. It has a nice summary diagram.

The chapter on the autonomic nervous system and motion sickness by Money, Lackner, and Cheung is long and somewhat redundant, with material that is covered elsewhere in the monograph. Its major flaw, in my opinion, is the hypothesis that vestibular motion sickness is a "poison" response. The best evidence supporting this view appears to be the work by Morrow reporting "cancer chemotherapy produced, in the patients with a history of motion sickness, significant more frequent, severe and longer-lasting nausea and vomiting than controls." The hypothesis is treated as a fact throughout the chapter, sometimes possibly giving a slanted view to these other parts. Money is a close, personal friend (as are the other two authors), and it is awkward for me to say that more supporting data on the poison theory is needed. One thought: How sensitive are labyrinthine defectives subjects to drug-induced nausea and vomiting?

All in all, it is a useful monograph. Does the reader wish to know about the vestibular system and its relation to the autonomic nervous system? If so, buy this book.

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