Book reviews

abnormalities noted in preceding sections. At other times, the author's favoured techniques are given prominence. Muscle diseases are accorded standard clinical descriptions. EMG findings are stereotyped: "short duration, low amplitude motor units with early recruitment" characterised many examples. However, despite these reservations, I am sure that this is a valuable text, and will find a secure place, particularly as a reference source and for the descriptions of several neurophysiological techniques where the author has had widespread experience.

M SHEEHY

Affective and Schizophrenic Disorders: New Approaches to Diagnosis and Treatment Edited by Michael R Zales (With preface by John C Nemiah). (Pp 304; paper \$41.00) New York: Raven Press, 1983.

This publication is the product of the 1982 Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. It is thus understandable that to the European reader it may appear somewhat parochially transatlantic in style and content. It is a multi-author volume and some authors deal very largely with their own work while others give a more general view of the topic under consideration. This uneven emphasis could be confusing for those not already well acquainted with the literature. The introductory chapter on the evolution of the biological understanding of affective and schizophrenic disorders is interesting and wide ranging. The section on diagnosis is well written and allowing for the nature of the volume it is not surprising that it is dominated by the concepts of DSM III. It is followed by an account of biological markers of functional psychoses which although competent and clear shows a certain bias towards positive findings. The description of depressive subtypes is an interesting account emphasising the work of the authors and their associates. The chapter on the pharmacological aspects of schizophrenia deals with a restricted range of drugs. That on antidepressants describes a wider spectrum of drugs but gives little indication of the quality of the evidence of their efficacy. It is perhaps surprising that in a book published in 1983 serious side effects are not mentioned in the case of either mianserin and zimelidine. There are two essays on the difficulties of assessing psychotherapeutic aspects one of which is more thoughtful and critical than the other.

The account of cognitive therapy and the evidence for its efficacy is very clear and informative. The unified view of affective disorders is perhaps necessarily vague and speculative. This criticism is however not applicable to the unified view of schizophrenia and indeed I have nothing but praise for this elegant, restrained and very well considered chapter. In particular its section on diagnosis was a pleasure to read and I shall certainly be recommending our postgraduate trainees.

The uneven emphasis of the book makes it an unsuitable textbook for examination purposes and those who no longer have to bother about such things will find some sections rather routine and lacking in originality. One or two of the chapters are however very worthwhile and this is probably a reasonable purchase for a library provided that current financial restrictions are not too severe.

EVE C JOHNSTONE

Multiple Sclerosis: a Guide for Patients and their Families Edited by Labe C Scheinberg. (Pp 268; paper \$12.00 h/back \$19.00) New York: Raven Press, 1983.

Times have changed with respect to the attitude amongst the medical profession that patients need to be protected from the name or implications of an illness such as multiple sclerosis. But in some instances, the setting, method or factual content of conversations between doctors, affected individuals and their relatives are unsatisfactory to the patient who may then want a supplementary source of information. The manifestations of multiple sclerosis are bound to assume different significance between cases, but this book will contain some useful information for most individuals with the disease.

In the early stages, patients usually want a factual account of the aetiology, symptoms, signs and prognosis; this book starts with three chapters containing an accurate and balanced, but perhaps too brief account of these aspects, including a chapter explaining diagnostic methods and the difficulties that can arise with diagnosis early in the disease, a situation where misunderstanding and subsequent recrimination may occur. The emphasis on protecting patients from over-enthusiastic and expensive investigation is presumably intended for those being managed under private health care systems in the United States, rather than the majority of patients in this country. The benign course of the

disease which occurs in up to 25% of patients is described, but not stressed; the book is written more for guidance of those moderately severe forms of the illness.

Those patients with established multiple sclerosis who have developed some degree of disability are understandably more concerned with discussing treatment than diagnosis and the book contains four chapters on medical, dietary, physical and surgical therapy. Many different approaches are discussed but very little distinction is made between symptomatic treatment, which is discussed in detail, and approaches designed to influence the long-term course of the disease and patients will remain uncertain on the indications and results obtained with forms of treatment which are at present of considerable public interest, some of which have already been assessed in clinical trials. Some statements relating to specific drug treatment are difficult to understand and confusing recommendations on drug dosage are included. Other parts of the book also contain too little definition, explanation and precision, although in general the contributors have taken care to make the book comprehensible.

The remaining eight chapters are concerned with management of severe disability; the introductory statement that the book is written for intelligent, well-educated, curious (and presumably North American) patients with multiple sclerosis is borne out by the linguistic style and issues addressed in these chapters which many patients in the UK will not find helpful. But the two chapters dealing with symptoms and management of bowel, bladder and sexual dysfunction demonstrate the potential value of the book and alone justify recommending it to patients with multiple sclerosis, their relatives and professional staff involved with their care.

ALASTAIR COMPTON

Brain Neurotransmitters and Hormones. Edited by Robert Collu, Jacques R Ducharme, Andre Barbeau, George Tolis. (Pp 425; \$62.56.) New York, Raven Press, 1982.

The title of this volume is indicative of the wide variety of topics covered. Individual chapters discuss brain dopamine function. GABA and benzodiazepines, peptides, the chronobiology of affective disorders, alcohol and stress and clinical psychoneuroendocrinology. The pharmacological basis of schizophrenia, tardive