

PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASUREMENTS IN PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY Vol. 7 Edited by P. Pichot and R. Olivier-Martin. (Pp. 267; illustrated; £14.30.) Karger: Basle. 1974.

The 'drug-trial' paradigm in psychopharmacological research is at first sight an extremely simple one. Patients with a fairly similar set of psychiatric symptoms are randomly assigned to two groups, one of which is administered the active drug and the other a placebo, under double-blind conditions. The efficacy of the active drug is then evaluated in terms of its therapeutic superiority to that of the placebo. But besides the very real practical problems of deciding on a constant versus a variable drug-dosage level and the ethical problems involved in placebo administration, the most crucial decision hinges on what to measure and how to measure it.

The development of psychopharmacology over the last 20 years has stimulated the rapid elaboration of instruments designed to tap and assess the symptomatology of the mentally ill. The most important characteristics of such instruments include a sensitivity to fluctuations in mental symptoms allied with a basic degree of reliability and external validity. This edited volume brings together contributions on the most frequently used instruments, including both self-rating and observer-rated scales, written by the researchers who developed them. Apart from two chapters which deal with the general problems of semantics and cooperative trials, each chapter has a similar format. The researcher describes the development of his particular scale, its rationale and psychometric properties, and reviews the various kinds of studies in which it has been employed.

This is an extremely valuable book for anyone embarking on a controlled trial of a psychopharmacological drug. It is well-organized and written, and contains a wealth of information never before brought together in the same volume. Its one possible omission is that of some of the scale protocols (no doubt forced on the editors through lack of space) but this is compensated for by very full reference lists. It will undoubtedly become a standard reference book for specialists in this field.

P. D. SLADE

DEMENTIA IN THE PRESENIUM By A. E. Slaby and R. J. Wyatt. (Pp. 227; \$12.75.) Thomas: Springfield, Ill. 1974.

This book sets out to give a review of presenile dementia for a wide audience, including neurologists, neurosurgeons, psychiatrists, other medical practitioners, and medical students. However, in view of the relative rarity of most of these conditions

in clinical practice it is difficult to satisfy the requirements of all these groups simultaneously.

In the introductory chapters various classifications of presenile dementia are suggested but the account of their development tends to blur rather than clarify this already slightly confusing field, and the authors do not finally agree on any single classification. In discussing the investigations available for delineating the various causes of presenile dementia, although these are described clearly and concisely, the relative value of the tests in individual conditions and the hazards involved in administering them are not discussed in any detail.

In the descriptions of the individual diseases the biochemical and psychological features are adequately discussed but the clinical descriptions tend to consist of lists of symptoms and do not give a clear picture of the actual patient presenting to the doctor. There is also little attempt to give greater space and detail to the more common conditions; for instance, Alzheimer's disease is discussed in similar detail to the Parkinsonism-Dementia complex of Guann.

The chapter on 'Other causes of dementia' is detailed and comprehensive and provides a fairly complete list of the numerous conditions which occasionally have dementia as a presenting symptom or in which dementia occurs during the course of the illness. However, once again, no attempt is made to group these conditions in a systematic way which would make them easily memorable or to discuss their relative frequencies in a clinical setting.

The chapter on therapeutic considerations is very sketchily written and is almost valueless. However, the book does contain a very comprehensive bibliography which might prove useful to anyone with a research interest in the subject.

In all, the book contains a good deal of interesting and useful material but would have gained considerably from a more organized presentation of the individual conditions or from more clinical details. Considering the relatively high price of \$12.75, it is rather poor value for the general reader.

M. R. BOND

WECHSLER'S MEASUREMENT AND APPRAISAL OF ADULT INTELLIGENCE By Joseph D. Matarazzo. (Pp. 572; £6.50.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1972.

Wechsler's classic work is a standard reference and needs no review. This notice is to draw attention to the 5th enlarged edition, now under the name of a new author, as it has new material and conclusions of his own on the professional and ethical responsibilities of the psychologist as a practitioner.

J. A. SIMPSON



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