

quality and usefulness; the good chapters are very good, the production of the book is excellent, and the price reasonable. Even if only a small number of doctors will want to purchase their own copy, it should be readily available for consultation by those treating patients with pain.

GD SCHOTT

Current Status of Modern Therapy Vol 8. Disorders of Movement Edited by André Barbeau (pp 216; £14.95) Lancaster: MTP Press, 1981.

In the past two decades there have been many intriguing and at times seemingly contradictory contributions to the field of movement disorders—an area of common and compelling interest to both neurologists and psychiatrists—and there has been a pressing clinical need for an authoritative statement. This is the purpose of the present volume. The historical scene is vividly set by André Barbeau whose scholarly survey embraces the fascinating mediaeval epidemics, the evolution of classical terminology and the judicious assessment of controversial, rare clinical entities. Only he who is confident about the diagnostic criteria of Dubini's electric chorea, Jumping Frenchmen of Maine, Latah of Malaysia and Myriachit of Siberia can afford to neglect this chapter.

Throughout the contributions concerning the pathophysiology and treatment of the dyskinesias, where critical reference is made to the salient papers on neurophysiology and experimental neuropharmacology one can detect a refreshing and invigorating editorial breeze of intellectual honesty. Thus in the treatment sections there is a marked absence of the irritating ambiguities of former handbooks such as "worthy of trial" or "may be helpful." It is categorically stated when there is no effective treatment; when side-effects outweigh limited benefit there is a firm directive. The decisive advances in the medical and surgical understanding of myoclonus, chorea, athetosis, torsion dystonia, tardive dyskinesias, essential tremor, Wilson's disease as well as Parkinsonism are succinctly summarised sifting reliable facts from doubt, speculation and groundless enthusiasm. This is a most welcome and successful book. It con-

cisely achieves its purpose of presenting the state of the art and it is warmly recommended to all clinicians.

GERALD STERN

The Physiology of Peripheral Nerve Disease Edited by Austin J Sumner (pp 504; £20.00) London: WB Saunders, 1980.

Clinical neurophysiologists will welcome this excellent account of the normal and abnormal physiology of peripheral nerves from 14 experts on different aspects. The introductory chapter on excitation and conduction in nerve is excellent though, surprisingly, the insight into membranes and their electrical properties has had surprisingly little practical application in electrodiagnosis (accommodation is only mentioned with respect to motoneurons). The book is not a primer of peripheral neurophysiology—the regulation of recruitment and firing frequency are not discussed—but in the restricted field of peripheral nerve disease it is comprehensive and accurate. The recent spate of information about demyelination is slowing down and this is an appropriate time for reviewing the position. A future edition might give more consideration to the other sheaths protecting the microenvironment of nerve. The toxicological evidence that peripheral nerves may be damaged at different points is noted. Certainly the grouping of neuropathies into segmental demyelination, "dying back," and Wallerian degeneration types is too simple and it is clear that the axonal neuropathies will figure more prominently in a later edition. The editor provides a succinct account of his fine work on experimental axonal neuropathies but does not discuss the less direct methods available for human studies. Motor unit counting, despite its limitations, is surely worth mentioning. Despite its orientation to the experimental preparation, the book will be referred to constantly by the clinical neurophysiologists as the chapters range widely over the relevant area. They include: excitation and conduction in nerve (Barchi), cutaneous receptors (McIntyre), mammalian muscle spindles (Kennedy and colleagues), motor units in mammalian muscle (Burke), trophic effects of nerve on muscle (Harris), axoplasmic transport (Pleasure), neuro-

muscular transmission (Pickett), demyelination (McDonald), acute compression block and entrapment neuropathy (Gilliat), axonal polyneuropathies (Sumner), autonomic nervous system (McLeod), and a clinical view of neuromuscular electrophysiology (Asbury).

The allocation of space is good and the authors have written clearly and concisely in this well conceived, produced and edited book.

JA SIMPSON

Molecular Neurobiology By Gordon G Guroff (pp 571; SFr 106.00) New York: Marcel Dekker Inc, 1980.

The title of this book recognises the need neuroscientists have to communicate beyond their immediate specialty, but the text hardly does justice to the broad concept of molecular neurobiology. Dr Guroff is a biochemist and, except for a short introductory chapter on neurocytology, he rarely ventures from the biochemist's brief. The book consists of 26 chapters divided unequally into three sections entitled "Biochemical Cytology of Nerve and Brain," "Metabolism and Function" and "Chemical Physiology of Nerve and Brain." The major section on metabolism consists largely of a description of general brain biochemistry—carbohydrates, amino acids, proteins, lipids, nucleic acids etc. In other sections there are useful chapters on the myelin sheath, tissue culture, nerve growth factor, neuropharmacology and memory and learning. As a background text for students and clinicians, therefore, the book has considerable value. An attractive feature is the clinical slant given to certain chapters, particularly those concerned with amino acids and lipids. As well as useful tables summarising the major abnormalities in amino acid and lipid metabolism associated with neurological or psychiatric symptoms, there are short case histories illustrating the relevance of neurochemistry to clinical problems.

In other respects the book is disappointing. There are few references to work published after 1975. While ample descriptions are given of the synthesis and degradation of the well known neurotransmitters, modern knowledge of the basic molecular mechanisms of synaptic transmission only receives cur-

sory treatment; for example much of a chapter entitled "The Mechanism of Conduction and Transmission" could have been written a decade ago and presents as fact a hypothesis concerning transmitter release long since discredited. The neuropeptides are given only a brief mention in the main text and about a page in an appendix devoted to recent developments. This and other omissions put the book well back from the frontiers of neurobiology. There is, however, an author index and an excellent subject index.

RICHARD RODNIGHT

Progress in Biochemical Pharmacology Vol 16 Endogenous Peptides and Centrally Acting Drugs Edited by A Levy, E Heldman, Z Vogel, Y Gutman (pp 160; Sfr 82; DM 98; US\$ 49.25) Basel: S Karger, 1980.

This volume is the proceedings of the 24th Annual OHOLO Biological Conference held in Israel in 1979, the subject being "Neuroactive Compounds and their Cell Receptors." Part of this meeting has already been published as the *Neurobiology of Cholinergic and Adrenergic Transmitters* (monographs in *Neuro Sciences* Vol 7). The book starts with an unwanted six page listing the participants of the meeting and the previous congresses held. The editors use the term "multidisciplinary" to cover the production of another un-homogeneous series of papers arising from a meeting—the necessity to publish being the apparent driving force. There are 10 papers on peptides from a variety of view points, one paper on benzodiazepines, three relating to different aspects of schizophrenia, and one dealing with purinergic transmission. Indeed, between the excellent start by Kosterlitz and the distinguished finale by Burnstock, lie a series of undistinguished papers which are unrepresentative of the field supposedly covered. The authors appear to have been limited by an allotment of approximately 10 pages each. This type of limit can thwart even the most illustrious authors. Not a book for the library or for the individual. All the information contained can be found elsewhere and it would take a brave individual or a rich establishment to afford the exorbitant £25 required for this 160-page work.

PG JENNER

Cerebral Vasospasm edited by DJ Boullin (pp 337; £15.00) Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1980.

This book deals with the clinical, pharmacological and pathological aspects of cerebral arterial spasm. The main emphasis of course is on cerebral vasospasm after subarachnoid haemorrhage due to a ruptured aneurysm, but the book also contains information relevant to head trauma, migraine and meningitis. Section 1 gives the historical perspectives of vasospasm and emphasises its association with a poor prognosis. There follows a chapter by J Mohan outlining the neurosurgeon's view of the relationship of vasospasm to surgical outcome. The chapter by George du Boulay on "Angiography—the radiologist's view" is without doubt one of the best in the book. His other chapter on "Cerebral blood flow in man and animals" also exhibits a clear and lucid style. This chapter deals with CBF methodology and CBF measurement in subarachnoid haemorrhage. I found it slightly curious that Dr Boullin in his chapter on "Principles of control of cerebral arterial blood flow" felt it necessary to deal with methodology as well. Furthermore surely autoregulation means the intrinsic ability of an organ to regulate its own blood supply in the absence of the autonomic nervous system? I can understand that if one firmly believes that prostacyclin is the important regulator of the cerebral circulation it is inconvenient to quote the literature extensively on the controversial matter of neurological control. However half a page or so hardly does justice to the complexity of this topic. If space were at a premium then all reference to Poiseuille's law could well have been omitted. This law only applies to tubes of constant diameter and is in any event not applicable where flow is pulsatile. On the other hand Dr Boullin's chapters on the pharmacological basis of spasm and clinical aspects are really quite good. A description of pathological changes in arteries after aneurysm rupture and other head injuries completes the first section. The second section which is entirely by Dr Boullin concentrates on recent advances in prostaglandin research, the discovery of the dilator prostaglandin prostacyclin and its potential role in the physiological control mechanism of cerebral blood

flow and in the clinical treatment of vasospasm. New methods of drug administration to neurosurgical patients are described. The book concludes with an evaluation of model systems useful in the stimulation of cerebral vasospasm and its relief.

This book should be read by anyone with an interest in this important topic. At £15 a copy many will be tempted to obtain the book for their own personal library.

IM JAMES

Alcoholism: The Facts By Donald W Goodwin (pp 129; £4.95) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Donald Goodwin is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Kansas. His research on the genetics of alcoholism has won international acclaim. Before turning to medicine he was a professional journalist. The book is of interest therefore both in relation to content, and the art form of popular presentation. As regards content, Goodwin lays out much information which should be useful to the intended readership—"people who worry about drinking—their own or somebody else's." The implicit framework of understanding which is offered is, though, essentially the traditional one of "alcohol as a disease," with lesser emphasis on that great array of alcohol-related troubles which make up the greater part of the community's adverse experience with this drug. The author is against population control of alcohol-consumption, by tax or licensing, as a prevention measure. Inevitably "the facts" are as it transpires not facts, but one distinguished author's interpretation of reality, considerably influenced by the orthodoxes of the old-time American alcoholism establishment.

As regards style, the exposition is free-flowing and refreshingly devoid of jargon. Any medical writer interested in the art of popularisation could turn to this book for a tutorial.

GRIFFITH EDWARDS

Head Injury By Louis Bakay and Franz E Glasauer (pp 445; \$32.25) Boston: Little Brown & Co, 1980.

The management of head injured patients has altered dramatically in the last decade and is still changing. Many



Molecular Neurobiology

Richard Rodnight

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