lingual (in many cases multilingual), and the opportunities for testing and developing Albert and Obler's ideas should present themselves relatively easily.

MKC MACMAHON

A Manual of Neurosurgery By MB Allen Jr, GS Doetsch, RA Gindin, FL Haar, and F Yaghami (pp 282; illustrated; \$24.95) University Park Press: Baltimore, London, Tokyo. 1978.

The strength of this large format American book lies in its readability and generous content of illustrations. Students will also appreciate the series of questions and brief case histories at the end of each chapter, with an appendix of answers and comments. This reinforces and expands the text without overloading the chapters. The approach is practical and businesslike but is too brief in parts—for example, that muscle tone is assessed only in cases of movement disorder. The cursory reference to certain drugs, often using the proprietary name alone, is irritating. To find obsolete spelling, for example "vocal chord" and printing errors including an inverted drawing is surprising in a paperback costing 25 dollars.

Despite the denunciation of imprecise terms such as "semi-comatose" the text contains phrases such as "the stuporous patient" and "decompensation ie stupor."

Careful editing would have obviated these criticisms, but in summary, the book provides a useful and interesting guide for medical students, nurses, and junior doctors.

BRIAN SIMPSON

Sleep, Vol 2: Diagnostic classification of sleep and arousal disorders Edited by WC Dement and C Guilleminault (pp 137; \$15.00) New York: Raven Press 1979

Misunderstanding of patients' complaints about sleep is widespread. There has been a recent dramatic change in this situation particularly in the USA where there has been a sharp expansion of facilities for the investigation and treatment of sleep disorders and their study has been elevated to a medical subspecialty. This journal issue contains an account of sleep and arousal disorders and classification of these by

symptom rather than by pathology or neurochemistry, developed by a committee of American psychiatrists and sleep researchers. The result is invaluable despite excessive coding and the limitations of any new nosology which will stimulate dissent as well as agreement. Thus many neurologists may doubt whether REM and NREM narcolepsy are different disorders, or whether sleep is refreshing in the former but not the latter condition. Surely, it is not difficult to distinguish narcolepsy from multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis, hypothyroidism or epilepsy. Classification of the effects of jet-lag, conflict, loss, stress and depression on sleep may not be of great value. Sometimes, too great reliance is put on sleep laboratory findings so that diagnosis is made by machine rather than by symptom. The degree of jargon can be vexatious—a typical example of style is "accordingly in the interest of developing an appropriate corresponding ICD-9-CM code for every ASDC-APSS sleep disorder syndrome." Despite all these problems, this volume contains a clear description of the characteristic features of many sleep-related syndromes, including conditions as diverse as paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria and restless legs. There are many references and an excellent glossary. Apart from debased language, this is highly recommended, although possibly of more value in the recognition and understanding of sleep disorders than in their codification.

DAVID PARKES

Uncommon Psychiatric Syndromes by Enoch, MD and Trethowan, WH (pp 193, £9.00). Bristol: John Wright and Sons, 1979.

Despite concentrated effort no great progress has been made in identifying disease entities rather than syndromes in psychiatry, so that the appearance of the second edition of this book is not anachronistic. There has been a worthwhile revision and updating of the chapters on the original seven syndrome:—Capgras, De Clérambault, Othello, Ganser, Couvade, Munchausen and Gilles de la Tourette. However, there are new chapters on Cotard's syndrome, *folie à deux et à plusieurs* and on possession states and syndromes, the addition of all seeming

unjustified. Even the authors agonise over whether Cotard's syndrome is worth designating as such. The nihilistic ideas entertained by some psychotically depressed patients do not usually dominate the clinical picture as does the morbid jealousy occurring in paranoid states. In the so-called possession states the prominence of the delusion of being possessed varies, in one case cited this being viewed as an explanation for leading somatic symptoms. The chapter on *folie à deux et à plusieurs* is more worthy of inclusion, pulling together much information about the subtle variations which occur and examining the difficulty in deciding who is the "inducer" and whether the "acceptor" is necessarily the more passive.

JAG WATT

Alzheimer's Disease Edited by AIM Glen and LJ Whalley (pp 203; £14.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1979.

Dementia is one of the commonest causes of admission to mental hospitals in the developed world. Recognition of the size of this problem has led to renewed research effort and to the publication of a number of monographs. This book records the papers and discussion at a symposium held in Edinburgh in February 1979. The meeting was mainly concerned with problems of early diagnosis of dementia of Alzheimer type and of the prospects for treatment of this disorder, and the book therefore consists of three parts concerning diagnosis, measurement of the functional neuropsychological defect in the disease, and possible treatments. Other causes of dementia receive attention only in proportion to their importance in the differential diagnosis. The epidemiology, biochemistry and neuropathology of Alzheimer's Disease is discussed in the first part of the book and the concluding third of the volume reports the results of attempts to improve cognitive function, and especially memory, by treatment with choline, lecithin or physostigmine, drugs which might be expected to have a cholinomimetic effect. This form of treatment has a theoretical basis in the biochemical finding of a cholinergic defect in the temporal lobe in patients with Alzheimer's disease but the results of these studies, most of which are preliminary