point of view of the treatment of persistent intractable pain.

The pattern in the new volume is unclear, and it seems that the subject matter strays beyond chronic intractable pain and techniques for its relief. Many of the investigations and treatments referred to are inappropriate outside specialist departments. The fact that pain can occur in a particular condition does not justify its inclusion unless it is relevant to pain relief when treatment of the primary condition has failed to give benefit. For instance, the treatment of gout and acute prolapse is not appropriate to a Pain Clinic, to name but two of many examples. Is it intended that future volumes should include the treatment of angina pectoris and renal colic? One of the reasons for some confusion is that the Pain Clinic in Liverpool is within the Department of Medical and Surgical Neurology, and there is, therefore, an easy interchange between clinics. However, this situation is unusual, and in most Pain Clinics, the physician in charge (often an anaesthetist) accepts a patient on the understanding that primary diagnosis and treatment of the underlying condition has been completed or pursued as far as possible. No series of volumes can expect to give a useful account of the management of all painful conditions. There are, however, some excellent chapters in Volume II, and these include *Personality and Pain*, *Radiology of Back Pain*, and *the Role of Peptides*. (One hopes that the diagram of the sensory distribution of the trigeminal nerve will not be quoted in any examination!) The book has much to commend it, but would have been more useful if it had been restricted to the general principles so well considered in the first volume.

PETER H SCHURR

Neuro-active Drugs in Endocrinology edited by EE Müller (pp 396; US\$59) Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1980.

The great complexity of amine and peptide pathways in the hypothalamus came as a big surprise when first discovered, and the study of these systems has prompted revision of many earlier views about neuronal function. In the last decade the boundary between hormones and neurotransmitters has been partly extinguished, the idea that one

CNS neurone synthesises one neurotransmitter questioned, and the concept that axonal synapses are the only means of interneuronal communications abolished. The introductory chapters of this symposium on neuro-endocrine disorder give an excellent critical introduction to these topics and describe recent brilliant experiments done to study the function and structure of hypothalamus and pituitary. Noteworthy chapters are by Palkovits on neurotransmitter distribution in the brain and by McCann on physiology. The remainder of the book, largely about neuropharmacology, pituitary hormones and diagnostic aids does not all achieve this high level, but the standard for a published conference proceedings remains consistently high. A total of 83 contributors from North America and Europe discuss the neuropharmacology of drugs acting on brain amine and peptide systems, the control of prolactin and growth hormone secretion, and the medical treatment of pituitary hormone over-production. This is now established as a viable alternative to surgical and radiation treatment. The standard of presentation and illustration is good apart from an occasional dose error, and the index is full. Despite being highly specialised, this is a useful and recommended book

DAVID PARKES

Benzodiazepines Today and Tomorrow Edited by R G Priest, U Vianna Filho, R Amrein, and M Skreta (pp 298; £14.95) Lancaster: MTP Press, 1980.

In September 1979, the First International Symposium on Benzodiazepines was held in Rio de Janeiro. However, this impressive title somewhat obscures the reality—Hoffman-La Roche supported a symposium attended by its own personnel, a few distinguished international speakers and many local Brazilian psychiatrists. Despite the absence of many international experts on the benzodiazepines, the meeting seems to have been useful if rather uncritical.

The chapters by Sternbach, Haefely and Kaplan on the history, biological basis and pharmacokinetics of the benzodiazepines are very good reviews. Otherwise many of the chapters are too narrowly oriented towards particular products to be useful. The drawbacks of

the benzodiazepines are hardly mentioned apart from a chapter by Bueno presenting preliminary data on dependence. Some chapters have large bibliographies, presumably provided by Hoffmann-La Roche. All in all, a book worth cadging but not buying.

M LADER

Cerebrospinal Fluid in Diseases of the Nervous System By Robert A Fishman (pp 384; \$18.25) WB Saunders and Co: Eastbourne, 1980.

This book fulfils a need for neurologists bringing together the recent advances in knowledge of fluid changes in neurological disease. It is nicely balanced with one half of the book devoted to anatomy, physiology and intracranial pressure and the other half dealing with the normal composition of the cerebrospinal fluid and to changes recorded in disease of the central nervous system.

The section devoted to physiology gives an excellent resumé of present knowledge of formation and absorption of CSF, including the evidence for active transport at choroid plexus level. The blood brain barrier in health and disease, together with the important pharmacological aspects of substances known to affect it are well done. The chapter on the performance of lumbar puncture and the complications thereof should be required reading for residents coming fresh to the investigation of patients with neurological disease. The description of changes of the cerebrospinal fluid in disease is exhaustive. Over 60 conditions are considered and, where appropriate, discussion of the abnormalities noted is invariably lively and helpful.

This will be a welcome addition to any neurological library.

EC HUTCHINSON

Addiction and Brain Damage Edited by Derek Richter (pp 305; £15.95) London: Croom Helm, 1980.

Alcohol and drug related problems are on the increase and in recent years interest has been focused on the mechanisms underlying dependence and tolerance. The advent of computed tomography has also made it possible to evaluate morphological changes in the brains of alcohol abusers. This timely volume contains the proceedings