Book reviews

Microsurgery for Cerebral Ischemia.

Edited by SJ Peerless and CW McCormick. (Pp 372; DM190, \$88.50.) Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1980.

This elegantly produced book with fine illustrations is a compilation of some 55 papers on the subject of the extracranial-intracranial bypass procedure. Most people are now aware of the explosion of interest in this procedure as a way of revascularising the ischaemic brain. This book is a testament to the enthusiasm with which the operation is being carried out on many thousands of patients, and to the careful study of those patients, and of the technical problems involved in achieving a successful anastomosis. No one doubts the ability of the procedure to increase blood flow in the middle cerebral territory for example, nor the fact that patency can be achieved in some 90% in good hands. Although many of these contributions discuss the clinical indications for the use of the procedure, what is sadly missing from this volume is a critical discussion of the rationale for its use. One has to wait for contribution number 50 called "The Failure of EC/IC bypass to alter ischaemia" for anyone to raise any serious doubts as to the thinking behind the operation. Elsewhere it is assumed that since low blood flow is associated with symptoms its artificial increase must be of therapeutic benefit. Sadly this is not necessarily the case. What is omitted is a discussion of the pathophysiology of critical ischaemia and a critique of the concept of chronic ischaemia. Measurements of cerebral oxygen utilisation and cerebral glucose utilisation by the positron emission tomography technique are clearly needed together with more animal work.

A large multicentre trial is currently underway in North America, Europe and Japan and there are over 1000 patients already entered and when this reports in a few years time we will be in a better position to judge whether the surgical enthusiasm reflected in the pages of this book is well founded or whether as many people have said this remains a treatment in search of a disease.

MJG HARRISON

Clinical Psychiatric Medicine. By Andrew E Slaby, Laurence R Tancredi and Julian Lieb. (Pp 742; £17.50.) London: Harper and Row, 1981.

There are few textbooks of psychiatry that can be recommended to students. The shorter ones, usually from one author, often fail to give enough detail, and do not explore the underlying concepts of the discipline. The longer ones are usually multi-authored, patchy in content, and not readable, being of value for reference. This book fits into an intermediate category, and can be recommended, especially for American readership. It has a small number of writers, is well-balanced, and easy to read. The early chapters cover history, personality theory, and give an overview of both the biological and sociological aspects of psychiatry. Part Two is devoted mainly to interviewing techniques and the issue of classification, and Part Three considers various psychiatric illnesses. The information given is significant and up-to-date. For example, in the section on affective disorders, the pineal, prostaglandins, and prolactin are all discussed, as well as the usual monoamine hypothesis. Under schizophrenia, endorphins, GABA and cerebellar changes receive consideration. The fourth section deals with treatments, and here the writers have not considered readers outside the USA, newer non-MAOI non-tricyclic antidepressants for example not being considered at all. The final section deals with the law, ethics, liaison psychiatry, and special paediatric and geriatric problems, rounding off a comprehensive but manageable volume that will probably find a place on many student bookshelves.

M TRIMBLE

Clinical Electroencephalography. By LG Kiloh, AJ McComas, JW Osselson, and ARM Upton. (Pp 292; £19.50.) Sevenoaks: Butterworths, 1981.

This book continues, in its latest edition, to provide a firm technological and descriptive basis for the beginner in clinical neurophysiology. The EEG illustrations are its greatest strength. They are probably the best available published collection in terms of comprehensiveness and (almost) universal clarity. With the fourth edition of such a successful textbook one expects to find the polish and distinction of a classic. Here, for all the agreeable layout, broad coverage and literate style, one has a tinge of disappointment. No doubt the fact that the index appears to have been involved in a minor landslide will be remedied when the publisher reprints. This and the somewhat restricted reference to the more recent literature are two of the weaker points. Happily the tendency to textual

emphasis on the non-specificity of EEG (in some sections every disease seems to lead rather boringly to *theta* and *delta* activity) is belied by the rich variety of the illustrations. New material for this edition includes particularly clear description of recent technological developments and an attractive and somewhat racy account of the field of event-related potentials. In spite of some quibbles, this volume can be recommended as the "best buy" for those approaching the clinical neurophysiology of the central nervous system.

PAMELA PRIOR

Epilepsy Explained. By Mary V Laidlaw and John Laidlaw. (Pp 83; £1.20.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1980.

Epilepsy. The Facts. By Anthony Hopkins. (Pp 158; £4.95.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Epilepsy generates more anxiety, misunderstanding, prejudice and social problems than any other neurological disorder. Much of this could be avoided (1) by greater understanding of its nature, complications and treatment, both by sufferers and their families, and by their immediate social contacts, whether at school, in employment or society at large; and (2) by a more sympathetic approach to patient's worries and questions by the medical and paramedical professionals involved in their care. The need to provide clear and simple information about epilepsy and its consequences is clearly present. To Scott's "About Epilepsy" and Burden and Schurr's "Understanding Epilepsy" have now been added two more recent small books with these objectives in mind.

In *Epilepsy Explained* Mary and John Laidlaw draw on their vast experience of answering patients and relatives questions in a reassuring and clear way with a minimum of technical information. After the usual brief description of different kinds of fits the Laidlaws, in 68 pages, concentrate on the following questions:—The purpose of the doctor's examination and tests, Treatment with tablets, How relations and friends can help, Does my epilepsy make me odd? Might I go mad? How can I help myself? What will people think of me? Is epilepsy associated with crime? Can I marry and have children? How can I get and keep a job?

On the other hand Hopkins, in 150 pages, provides much more detailed medical information in more conventional textbook style, with chapters covering What is