Book reviews

about the activation and importance of descending control mechanisms in chronic pain in man.

Fordyce considers learning processes in pain, and Merskey lucidly reviews the complex relationships of pain complaints to psychiatric disease. There are chapters on the behavioural measurement of pain, outlining the many difficulties and pitfalls of the psychophysical methods involved (Wolf), and psychodynamic aspects of pain including conversion reaction, hypochondriacal reaction and psychotic depression (Pilowsky). Hilgard reviews the role of hypnosis in pain treatment, tackling some of the major criticisms of the methods and results of this form of treatment. Finally, Sternbach considers some wider aspects, including ethnic differences in expression of pain, psychogenic pain, the economic consequences of chronic pain, and the relevance of litigation. The major forms of psychological treatment currently in use for chronic pain are described, including relaxation therapy, biofeedback, cognitive and behavioural methods. Sternbach ends with the observation that there have been very few studies of the efficacy of any psychological methods of treatment.

All too often, chronic pain is mechanistically interpreted in terms of nerve impulses and chemical changes. This book provides a wider framework and a realistic clinical perspective. It is recommended reading for all those dealing with patients with chronic intractable pain and it serves as an excellent general introduction of the subject of chronic pain.

JW SCADDING

Ultrasonic Diagnosis of Cerebrovascular Disease. Edited by M P Spencer. (Pp 306; £57.50.) Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1987.

There was initially some concern that the introduction of intravenous digital subtraction angiography would make ultrasound examination of the extracranial and cerebral vessels obsolete. However, this has not turned out to be the case and hospitals wishing to investigate vascular problems should have access to an ultrasound department.

This excellent book gives a state of the art presentation of Doppler evaluation and ultrasound imaging of the carotid and vertebral arteries and in addition of the transcranial Doppler technique. A few of

the chapters are rather historical and the techniques described rarely or no longer used in departments where more modern techniques are available, for example Duplex scanning. However, even these chapters will provide useful background for someone wishing to become acquainted with non-invasive assessment of the cerebral vessels.

Many multi-author books suffer from a lack of uniformity and purpose but the subjects covered by the various chapters are well chosen and there is a pleasing uniformity on which the editor should be congratulated. The book is clearly written and well illustrated and should be available in any hospital with an ultrasound department and will prove an ideal introduction and reference book to anyone interested in non-invasive assessment of cerebral vessels.

DJ THOMAS

Cellular and Molecular Basis of Cholinergic Function. (*Ellis Horwood Series in Biomedicine.*) Edited by M J Dowdall and J N Hawthorne. (Pp 941; DM 340.) Weinheim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1987.

Every 3 years sees a world-wide gathering of those interested in the cholinergic systems. This volume records the proceedings of the sixth such meeting held in Buxton, Derbyshire in May 1986. It consists of approximately 1000 pages divided into over 100 chapters which cover every aspect of cholinergic function. This particular volume is dedicated to the memory of Dr Brian Ansell who contributed much to this area but who sadly died after the Buxton meeting.

In the initial chapter Professor Wilhelm Feldberg reflects on the discoveries of major importance made by himself and others in the 1930's and which were largely responsible for the current interest that exists in cholinergic systems. There follows a series of 23 chapters devoted to the characterisation of cholinergic receptors and their second messenger systems. The important issues of receptor classification and purification are particularly emphasised. In a subsequent section detailed consideration is given to acetylcholine release, the functional properties of synaptic vesicles, the synthesis of acetylcholine and the regulation of cholinergic neurons by trophic factors and other regulatory molecules. The final series of chapters cover functional changes in cholinergic transmission in patho-

physiological conditions. Initially, the actions of a variety of neurotoxins are described since they have contributed enormously to the study of cholinergic systems. The focus of the book then turns to the effect of aging and diet on cholinergic function, disorders of neuromuscular transmission and Alzheimer's disease. There is also a very mixed section on the action of lithium and other psychotropic drugs which seems out of place.

Clearly, there is an enormous amount of data contained within this volume. The editors and publishers are to be congratulated in publishing this volume so soon after the meeting. As such, it provides an up-to-date account of cholinergic research. The chapters do, however, vary enormously in quality and depth of coverage. Some are highly detailed providing a state of the art appraisal of important areas. Others are so short and superficial as to be of no use to the reader. Whether this reflects the space allocated to different topics or the differing views of authors towards the conference proceedings is not clear. It is pleasing that this is a typeset volume and at least looks homogenous as opposed to the camera-ready volumes which so often follow meetings and which allow editors virtually no editorial intervention.

Certainly this will be a highly quoted reference volume until the next triennial meeting of the group. The presentation of the book overall is good. I noted some mistakes in indexing and the placement of running titles. The print quality varied in the copy sent for review. It is a volume many will find useful but unfortunately not one many individuals will be able to afford. At £110 it will stretch the budgets of many librarians.

P JENNER

Multiple Sclerosis, Immunological, Diagnostic and therapeutic aspects. *Current Problems in Neurology 3.* Edited by F Clifford Rose and Rosemary Jones. (Pp 260; £26.00) London: John Libbey & Co Ltd, 1987.

This volume is based on a symposium supported in the autumn of 1986 by the Association for Research into Multiple Sclerosis. It contains 33 contributions covering selected aspects on the immunologic diagnostic and therapeutic features of the disease. These naturally reflect and express the interests and enthusiasms of the many individuals and teams involved and not all of the ideas expressed would likely have been found