book is recommended for all those who are interested in neurobiology of higher cognitive functions, be they basic neuroscientists or psychiatrists.

PL LANTOS

Subcortical Dementia. Edited by J L CUMMINGS (Pp 267; Price £35.00). Oxford University Press, 1990. ISBN 0-19-505716-3

The topic is clear. The editor defines subcortical dementia as a clinical syndrome characterised by bradyphrenia, impaired memory and executive function with mood and personality changes resulting from dysfunction of subcortical structures; the latter designated as white matter tracts connecting frontal lobe and subcortical nuclei. The problem is whether the condition exists. While the association of intellectual impairment with subcortical disease was proposed as early as 1861 by Charcot and Vulpian, and the term subcortical dementia was coined by von Stockert in 1932 when describing post-encephalitic disease and was resurrected in 1974 by Albert and colleagues in a study of progressive supranuclear palsy, the identity of the condition remains controversial.

Dr Cummings has assembled a formidable team to plead his case. Diverse presentations, historical, clinical, neuropsychological, anatomical, neuroimaging, theoretical, conceptual and terminological are lucidly argued. It is also frankly conceded that very few diseases are exclusively limited to subcortical structures and the reservations of those who are unable to distinguish allegedly characteristic neuropsychiatric profiles are fairly presented and considered. Nevertheless a scholarly, historical view of the evolution of the concept by Mandell & Albert still leaves the question undecided. It would appear that despite the surfeit of comments and opinions there is still a remarkable paucity of meticulous serial, clinical and psychological assessments and neuropathological correlations. Until this information is available, and it will require patient and arduous labouring in the clinical fields, dispute will continue as well as the need for stimulating books of this kind.

GERALD STERN

Ryan—A Mother's Story of her hyperactive—Tourette Syndrome Child. By SUSAN HUGHES (Pp 149; Price \$9.95). Duarte, CA: Hope Press, 1990. ISBN 1-878267-26-4
Tourette Syndrome and Human Behavior. By DAVID E COMINGS (Pp 828; Price \$39.95). Duarte, CA: Hope Press, 1990. ISBN 1-878267-28-0

David Comings believes that the Gilles de la Tourette syndrome should be perceived as one clinical manifestation of an autosomal dominantly inherited neurobehavioural genetic disorder that may also cause attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity, obsessional-compulsive disorder, conduct disorder, dyslexia, anxiety with phobias and panic attacks, alcoholism and drug dependency, eating disorders, pathological gambling and periodic behaviours such as rage attacks and

the premenstrual syndrome. This is in sharp contrast to the concept put forward some years ago by the Shapiros who considered Gilles de la Tourette syndrome to be a specific neurological disease and that tics are akin to other abnormal movement disorders such as dystonia and chorea. Despite the fact that *Tourette Syndrome and Human Behavior* was written with the lay reader and health or educational professional in mind it is a large tome containing 828 pages and 630 illustrations.

Comings confesses that it was conceived at a stage when his own ideas about Gilles de la Tourette syndrome were evolving and new biological information about the condition was flooding in. Instead of returning to his manuscript and shuffling the text to accommodate these changes he has heretically opted to add on new ideas and data as they became available giving the overall impression of a book with no beginning or end, ebbing and flowing on a fertile sea of popular science.

Comings flits delightfully and capriciously over his subject matter interspersing chapters on neurogenetics with alcoholism and sexual deviancy with tryptophan metabolism; and somehow despite the impulsive helter skelter of thought the book makes enjoyable and informative reading. I was disappointed with the case histories which were terse and sterile and failed to portray any better than descriptive text would have done the difficulties experienced by patients with these problems. The book has a West Coast flavour to it and may not translate easily to a European lay audience. However, it reflects accurately Comings's expansive genetic viewpoint about Gilles de la Tourette syndrome and will be read with avid fascination by physicians and others involved in the management and care of those with this long-neglected, distressing condition.

The second book, also published by Hope Press, is a moving account of a mother's experience in coping with her son's Gilles de la Tourette syndrome. It is written compassionately and conveys to a lay reader the horrific social traumas which Tourette syndrome may cause. It outlines the trials and tribulations resulting from the associated behaviour disturbances in a way which no textbook could, and the difficulties many families meet in attempting to obtain even a correct diagnosis, never mind appropriate treatment. The book contains a large number of helpful coping strategies for families and re-emphasises the old adage that having a name for one's medical condition is a reassurance not just for the physician, but also for the patient, and a source of comfort and hope for relatives. Perhaps these two books should be sold together as a package as they complement one another extremely well. I now routinely recommend this book to parents of children with Tourette syndrome, most of whom have commented that they have found it a blessing rather than a frightening saga of what lies in store.

A J LEES

Brain Edema: Pathogenesis, Imaging and Therapy. (Advances in Neurology, Vol 52). Edited by D M LONG (Pp 588; Price: \$154.00) 1990. New York, Raven Press. ISBN 0-88167-625-X

This volume is the latest in this series of

monographs and is based on the meeting of the International Society for the Study of Brain Edema held in Baltimore, Maryland, USA in 1987. It is made up of 68 Papers and 22 Abstracts comprising presentations from over 200 contributors.

With increasing specialisation it is very difficult to keep abreast of all the developments that are taking place within the Neurosciences. The publication of series such as *Advances in Neurology* is therefore timely providing in this volume with a comprehensive amount of information of a clinical, investigative and an experimental nature. The importance of brain edema is stressed by its frequent occurrence in patients following stroke, trauma and in association with tumour. In spite of modern non-invasive investigative techniques it remains somewhat of an enigma, although an increasing amount of knowledge about its pathogenesis is providing a more rational basis for therapy. The complexity of brain edema is shown by the large number of laboratory studies that report the diverse mechanisms and mediators of edema. Such understanding provides the basis of pharmacological intervention, the range of therapies now including calcium channel blockers, osmotic agents and steroids.

Although the information within this volume is dated by several years it nevertheless brings together a wide ranging literature that provides a comprehensive review for both expert and non-expert alike and as such is a ready source of reference material. Dr Long is to be congratulated on standardising the text of the various contributions most of which are well written and concise. It is therefore easy to recommend this additional volume to neuroscientists.

D I GRAHAM

SAQ's in Psychiatry. By D BHUGRA. (Pp 152; Price: £9.95) Guildford, Butterworth Scientific Ltd. 1990. ISBN 0-407-01887-5

The title of this short book may be unfamiliar to many readers. SAQ's stands for Short Answer Questions, which come midway between multiple choice questions (MCQ's) and essays and are now part of the MRCPsych examination. Each SAQ should be completed in about 5 minutes so it is important for candidates to have knowledge at their fingertips and to be able to express it succinctly.

In this short book Dr. Bhugra gives the answers to nearly 300 questions in SAQ format and these are accompanied by notes on the strategy of tackling SAQ's and key references from books and journals. Nearly half of the book is concerned with questions on general psychiatry but there are separate sections for each of the major relevant specialties, including neuro-anatomy, psychology, statistics and the psychiatry of mental handicap. The book is nicely laid out and the model answers are succinct and generally comprehensive. I detected one error—the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale is not an observer inventory—and the description of frontal lobe syndrome omits the specific clinical features and concentrates only on personality and mood change. However, minor errors are almost always unavoidable in books of this nature and could easily be ironed out in subsequent editions.

I found this a sound and useful aid that should be of value to candidates taking Part 2 of the MRCPsych. examination. Whilst there are undoubted limitations in this form of examination, so that subjects with a "softer" database such as community psychiatry and personality disorder do not get an adequate airing, this book will certainly help understanding as the answers provide sufficient background to each subject to stimulate the reader and not serve merely as an aide-memoire.

PETER TYRER

Imaging of the Nervous System (Clinical Medicine and the Nervous System Series). Edited by PAUL BUTLER. (Pp 271; Price: DM 348.00) Heidelberg, Springer-Verlag. 1990. ISBN 3-540-19522-X

This book is part of a series dealing with "Clinical medicine and the Nervous System" edited by John Conomy and Michael Swash. It presents an overview of neuroradiology as it is currently practiced in Britain and it is written mainly for the benefit of neurologists and neurosurgeons. The contributors are mainly well established neuroradiologists each with a particular interest in their allotted subject. There are also contributions from experts in isotope imaging and contrast media. The editor has succeeded admirably in producing a well balanced exposition of current practice which will prove valuable not only to the group for which it was intended but also to general radiologists. Unfortunately some chapters reflect the limitations imposed by restricted access to magnetic resonance imaging and this will much detract from the value of the book in countries with free access to this modality.

All the authors have covered their subject very adequately and some of the contributions, particularly those on trauma, infections and the spine are at an advanced level and suitable for teaching of neuroradiologists. The book is beautifully produced and well illustrated. It is recommended to clinicians, with an interest in neurological diagnosis, to general radiologists and to all neuroscientists in training.

BRIAN KENDALL

Alcohol and Seizures Basic Mechanisms and Clinical Concepts. Edited by R J PORTER, R H MATTSON, JOYCE A CRAMER, AND I DIAMOND. (Pp 342; Price: £39.72) Beckenham, Quest-Meriden Ltd. 1990. ISBN 0-8036-7008-7.

In spite of the fact that alcohol dependency and seizures are two of the most frequently encountered illnesses and almost every physician has treated alcohol withdrawal seizures, there has never been a book which has attempted to explain and understand these problems together.

The book, composed of 32 chapters of varying but mainly superior quality, is written by different authors. Beginning with a clinical coverage of epilepsy and alcohol related problems, and the relationship between the two, the reader is gently initiated

into this complex field. By the third chapter, however, we plunge into the realm of basic science and the proposed mechanisms for alcohol withdrawal seizures (AWS). This part is pertinent and very useful particularly for investigators in the fields of alcohol research, including AWS, and epilepsy.

The last two parts of the book deal with classification, diagnosis, prevention and treatment of AWS. Although there is repetition among chapters, this part is of great importance to the clinician. It is relevant for all (not just neurologists and psychiatrists) who work with people who have alcohol problems and/or epilepsy. That should therefore include the majority of practising physicians.

In the past, most of our perceptions of the relationship between alcohol use and seizures as well as alcohol and epilepsy have been more influenced by moral and ethical considerations than upon scientific knowledge. Unfortunately, views unsubstantiated by experimental studies have often been imparted to patients as well. This book is a successful attempt to change this situation. Important questions such as whether people with epilepsy should drink alcoholic beverages, if drinking exacerbates seizures, if patients experiencing AWS should be given long term therapy with anticonvulsant drugs, or what is the best first drug for the treatment of AWS, are discussed in detail. Other questions such as how tolerance on, and physical dependence to alcohol develop are addressed down to the molecular level.

All in all, "Alcohol and Seizures" is a comprehensive coverage of understanding and treatment of alcohol related seizures. It is well worth reading and should have a place in the libraries of both clinicians and neuroscientists.

ELINOR BEN-MENACHEM

Shadow over my Brain: A Battle against Parkinson's Disease. By C TODES. (Pp 150; Price: £12.95). Gloucestershire, The Windrush Press, 1990. ISBN 0-900075-86-4.

This is a book of general interest written with a lay readership in mind. However, it is written by a medical practitioner who was practising as a psychoanalyst when, at the age of 39, he developed Parkinson's disease. For a medical readership there is the potential sense of being able to identify with the experience of chronic disease in a colleague: for the layman—presumably with Parkinson's disease—the identification with Dr Todes' experiences is likely to be less for a number of reasons.

Dr Todes uses a highly psychoanalytical approach. When discussing causation he remarks "... no doubt that through consolidated pathways of subsequent experience my Parkinson's disease represents that weeping function". And when discussing treatment "to be achieved without subduing the patient's assertiveness, which was better for the ultimate reconciliation of the loving and hating capacity..." Such an approach is currently unfashionable in clinical neurology and seems likely to confuse a patient with the disease.

Dr Todes has investigated his response to an extraordinary variety of treatments for Parkinson's disease. Levodopa, Deprenyl, endorphins, Pergolide, Terguride, Lisuride,

iron, anticholinergics, and finally foetal brain implant surgery. It is disappointing that there is little description of the benefits of these various treatments, or their side effects. And the description of the preparation for the operation seems likely to give the impression that this procedure is done without any clearcut indications or precautions.

After reading this book I was left unable to relate to Dr Todes' brave journey seeking relief from Parkinson's disease; and, with the strong impression that my patients would also find it difficult to learn from his experience.

Can this book teach the practising neurologist something about the disease that he can not learn in clinical practice? Any account as sophisticated as this must remind us of the importance of sensitive discussion and explanation, and above all, the need to listen and ponder on the patient's problems. Parkinson's disease is as various as the patient's suffering from the condition. Standardised treatment is just the start of a contract between patient and physician to mitigate the effects of this unpleasant disease.

R B GODWIN-AUSTEN

1990 Yearbook of Psychiatry and Applied Mental Health. Editor-in-Chief: J A TALBOTT. (Pp 426; £44.00). London: Wolfe Publishing Ltd, 1990. ISBN 0-8151-8930-3.

This book follows the format of its predecessors, and divides the subject into 10 major areas, each with its own editor. Neither social psychiatry nor psychiatric epidemiology manage to get into this classification, since the approach is both clinical and North American. Each area is managed by its own editor, who writes a short introduction, selects what he considers to be interesting papers, and writes a summary of each selected paper followed by a pithy comment of his own. Inevitably, one is in the hands of each editor. Although the range of journals scanned is wide, the selections are fairly quixotic, with important articles omitted and trivial ones included. Given the scope of the undertaking, this is probably inevitable.

However, your reviewer learned considerably more by reading Yudofsky's chapter on "clinical psychiatry" than he has ever done by attending international conferences, and this was achieved in less than one hour without having to consume a single air-line meal. In addition to many important papers that I happened to have seen, I learned about accurate clinical diagnosis of early dementia by enhanced cue recall; about reduced serotonin turnover in suicidal and impulsively aggressive people; about abnormalities on chromosome 5 in schizophrenia; that the overestimation of size in patients with anorexia nervosa also applies to inanimate objects; and that when multiple sclerosis presents as depression the diagnosis will be missed by CT scan but picked up by MRI scan.

The above chapter showed an admirable grasp of European papers as well as the North American literature. Elsewhere the editing is less deft. Tarrier and his colleagues are referred to as "The British Group" for their work on high EE and relapse in schizophrenia; and the same editor wishes to have patients "who have benefited most" from being placed in a seclusion room "explain the