
A competition for the least helpful book on the cerebral circulation would be a close run race these days. Many have been conference proceedings with all the limitations which these impose on the composition of a coherent account of any subject. But this book was planned by two editors, who invited contributors to write on specific topics. If the editors had a plan in their minds they have covered up their tracks skilfully, and as they do not even write a preface they are not tempted to give away any clues. There are chapters on related topics which present different, and sometimes conflicting, views, but such chapters do not even appear beside each other. The book begins with two idiosyncratic methods of measuring blood flow, one from Japan and one from Bulgaria; as one of these authors has 14 references and the other 27 references to himself, each is obviously advancing a rather personal view. Other fringe methods are described, but nowhere do the editors attempt to put this complex subject in perspective. Scattered through the book are animal studies and clinical investigations of either normal or abnormal blood flow, in between random eruptions of pure methodology. There are a few good chapters, but their authors must be embarrassed to find the context in which they appear. After about a decade of measuring cerebral blood flow a critical appraisal of the state of the art is badly needed. It is a pity that the effort and energy of so many in this field was wasted on this disorganized book, and the opportunity lost for a responsible stocktaking.

J. H. D. MILLAR


This volume describes the creation of a record-linkage system which made possible the maintenance of a cumulative index of all patient contacts with the psychiatric services in North-East Scotland, a region based on the city of Aberdeen, and its medical school. Dr. J. A. Baldwin was responsible for the...