

**NEUROLOGICAL COMPLICATIONS OF ORAL CONTRACEPTION** By Edwin R. Bickerstaff. (Pp. 107; illustrated; £4.) Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press: London. 1975.

Dr Bickerstaff played an important part in convincing fellow neurologists of the part played by oral contraceptives in causing strokes in young women at a time when this was being hotly contested. It is a sharp reminder that statistics can be used to demonstrate that a relationship is unlikely to be due to chance alone but never to prove the converse. Many will be unfamiliar with his observation that the cerebrovascular danger of the Pill is largely in women who have already had a pregnancy. The exact cause-effect relationship remains obscure. Even more tantalising is the role of contraceptive hormones in chorea and other involuntary movements, papilloedema, benign intracranial hypertension, migraine, and epilepsy. In such an uncertain field all will welcome this short account of the author's experience and the available literature. The reviewer is regularly asked for advice on the safety of the Pill in patients with multiple sclerosis. This is one area in which Dr Bickerstaff does not venture an opinion.

J. A. SIMPSON

**THE HUMAN NERVOUS SYSTEM** By Murray L. Barry. (Pp. 442; illustrated; \$12.95.) Harper and Row: Hagerstown, Md. 1974.

This book, which appears in paperback as a second edition, provides a useful account of the anatomy of the nervous system. The main part of the book is devoted to a comprehensive account of the regional anatomy of the spinal cord, brain and special senses. This follows an introductory section on histology and later sections deal with the cerebral circulation and cerebrospinal fluid. The text is comprehensive without being exhaustive, and is easily read, clear and concise, and there are many excellent line diagrams and half-tone illustrations. Although the emphasis is on morphology, there are useful reviews of the functions of the parts described and of relevant clinical disorders. At the end of each chapter there is a short but carefully selected list of references. The book has been written primarily for students approaching the neurological sciences for the first time, but post-graduate students and practising clinicians will also find it useful. It can be warmly recommended.

J. A. R. LENMAN

**BRAIN DISORDERS** By S. Bogoch. (Pp. 312; illustrated; £12.15.) Spectrum: New York. 1974.

This volume of proceedings of a Conference on the Future of Brain Sciences reviews many aspects of current research into brain physiology, anatomy, and

biochemistry, and in most instances the experts have contributed original papers.

In a short 20 years, neurology has moved in neuroscientific knowledge from basic chemistry of lipoproteins to detailed studies of neurotransmitters. Treatment of behaviour disorders has advanced from leucotomy to the use of stimuloreceivers.

To a clinical neurologist the glimpse we now have of links between structure and function is vastly encouraging. For example, neurones destined to form a given pathway seem to carry molecular labels which allow them to be connected (or regenerate) according to a plan laid down in some genetic blueprint. From such a coded pathway for reflex and instinctive behaviour, as Virgas points out, it is not a large leap to see how this system could be adapted for processing acquired information. The language is, as might be expected, in places rather modern. One author comments 'one can easily intuit such a mechanism'. The brain sciences need innovators in all the teams of interdisciplinary research in order to sustain recent momentum.

The report of the conference, which was truly international, was integrated with visits to laboratories and was strictly limited in size, is likely to outlast in usefulness the reports of unwieldy world congresses filled with disparate and unoriginal papers which are disgorged in increasing numbers by publishing houses each year.

R. BANNISTER

**ATLAS OF GROSS NEUROSURGICAL PATHOLOGY** By Klaus J. Zulch. (Pp. 228; illustrated; \$49.) Springer: Berlin. 1975.

This atlas deals solely with gross neurosurgical pathology. Indeed one might question the accuracy of the title since only two topics are dealt with in detail, namely, increased intracranial pressure and displacement caused by space-occupying lesions, and tumours of the nervous system. There is no section on head injuries—this will be the subject of a subsequent atlas—while there are only short sections on cerebrovascular disease, inflammation, brain swelling and obstructive hydrocephalus.

As one might expect from Professor Zulch, the two major topics are dealt with superbly, an abundance of illustrations being accompanied by a concise, informative, and in some ways slightly provocative text. But Professor Zulch's observations are based on a wealth of experience that must always command respect.

One could not unreasonably question the number of illustrations and suggest that there is some repetition, but anyone with an interest in the nervous system could not fail to be fascinated by the almost

unending series of superb illustrations of distortion and herniation of the brain and of tumours of the nervous system. In addition to the illustrations, there are many interesting and informative diagrams of the preferential sites of predilection of specific brain tumours and tables of their age and sex incidence.

One has to accept that fully illustrated atlases must be expensive, and this is no exception particularly since it really has to be used in conjunction with Zulch's *Atlas of the Histology of Brain Tumours*, but this is an important atlas which ought to be readily available in libraries and departments to everyone with an interest in clinical neuropathology.

J. HUME ADAMS

A MANUAL FOR RESIDENTIAL AND DAY TREATMENT OF CHILDREN By M. G. Evangelakis. (Pp. 369; \$14.50.) Thomas: Springfield, Ill. 1974.

This manual is intended for the guidance of the various professional groups concerned with the in-patient care of emotionally disturbed and mentally ill children. The author, who is psychiatric director of the Children's Division, South Florida State Hospital, Hollywood, Florida, has produced what in Britain we refer to as a manual of clinical procedures of the type which many departments provide for junior medical staff on their arrival. The emphasis here is, however, mainly on administrative structure (with numerous 'organograms'), schedules of work, and lines of communication with occasional brief excursions into theoretical orientation and philosophy of endeavour. It is all very detailed, precise, and possibly rather rigid. It is the sort of presentation more likely to raise hackles than questions. Yet, in a rapidly developing specialty where little has yet been published on the principles of residential psychiatric treatment of children, Dr Evangelakis has made a brave contribution.

FRED H. STONE

PSYCHIATRIC DIAGNOSIS By R. A. Woodruff, D. W. Goodwin, and S. B. Guze. (Pp. 222; illustrated; £2.50.) Oxford University Press: New York. 1974.

This book is almost a brief textbook of psychiatry, embodying the attitudes and the fruits of the research of the school of psychiatry at Washington University, St Louis. Yet the title is appropriate, since the authors' main concern is with diagnosis, as precise diagnosis as possible. Their diagnostic criteria, set out in operational terms in an appendix, have been derived from surveys of clinical features of groups of patients as well as from family studies and follow-up investigations. This approach is vigorously defended in another appendix, entitled

'Disease in medicine and psychiatry'. As one of the authors points out in the foreword to the book, this approach, often contemptuously dismissed as organic, would be more accurately described as agnostic. As befits a man from Missouri, he wants to see the evidence.

Twelve psychiatric categories are described, which account for most of the classical syndromes, although their concept of hysteria is more circumscribed than that of most psychiatrists. The authors also have a category of 'undiagnosed'. The book has much to commend it. To start with, it is well produced and reasonably priced. It contains lots of facts, lots of up-to-date references. There is little speculation, very little of psychodynamics, and the dynamically inclined reader may find it all rather arid. Moreover, treatment is adumbrated rather than described. But one must remember that the authors make no claim to cover the whole field of psychiatry, or even to provide a true textbook, so that these limitations can hardly be held against them. I think that the book is worth buying for what it is.

J. L. GIBBONS

PSYCHOBIOLOGY OF CONVULSIVE THERAPY Edited by Max Fink, Seymour Kety, James McGaugh, and Thomas A. Williams. (Pp. 312; illustrated; £6.40.) Winston: Washington. 1974.

Since convulsive therapy was introduced by von Meduna in the 1930s it has been galling to psychiatrists that so little should be known about what is probably their most effective single therapeutic tool. Recently there have been signs that the clouds of mystery and superstition which surround ECT might soon be dissipated.

This volume reports the proceedings of a conference held in Puerto Rico in 1972 which was attended by many international experts who have contributed to advances in this field. It brings together most of what was then known about the effects of convulsive therapy in depression as well as important data on its influence on different aspects of memory and learning, and describes the results of investigations on the biochemical changes associated with its use. The concluding chapters by the editors summarize in an admirably succinct form the results of years of experimentation in many centres, and add some interesting speculations which should lead others to formulate testable hypotheses. The only notable omission is the lack of information provided on the use of this form of treatment on certain types of schizophrenia.

The book should at least be browsed through by all practising psychiatrists and by anyone interested in the biological aspects of mental illness.

RAYMOND LEVY