

Book reviews

THE AMPHETAMINES: TOXICITY AND ADDICTION By O. J. Kalant. (Pp. 188; \$8.75.) Thomas: Springfield, Ill. 1973.

Written by a physiologist who is also a biochemist on the staff of the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario, this monograph first appeared in 1966. The second edition has been called for by the occurrence of fresh forms of addiction, and by the results of recent efforts to restrict the availability of amphetamines (both by government action—as in Canada, and by the decision of doctors themselves—as in parts of Britain). Increasingly, amphetamines have come to be viewed as of limited therapeutic use, prescription only rarely warranted. Doctors in western countries have been alarmed by the frequency of housewives becoming misusers on prescription.

At the same time, however, non-medical use has increased greatly. Intravenous administration has become frequent, and so also has group indulgence by young people; epidemics have occurred, such as the one in England during 1968; the post-war Japanese epidemic has been ascribed to ready availability and low social morale as an aftermath of national defeat. The author reviews first acute intoxication, which can be fatal or else results in a transitory psychosis with hallucinations and delusions of persecution. Chronic therapeutic use is then described; it can be without ill effect, or can produce toxic symptoms which are exaggerated characteristic effects of the drug. Amphetamine psychosis is the most serious toxic consequence, closely resembling paranoid schizophrenia.

The author then demonstrates convincingly that true addiction occurs, refuting those who dispute this on the wrong grounds that physical withdrawal symptoms are not seen, and that chronic users are mostly psychopaths. Due to marked tolerance, the addict requires large amounts, and his chronic intoxication manifests as CNS overstimulation, with erratic behaviour, insomnia, anorexia, and irritability.

The author also dismisses the view that current misuse differs from that documented during the '60s. She considers that a sharp contrast between the familiar 'low-dose oral' pattern and the more recent 'high-dose intravenous' pattern is misleading and unwarranted. She criticizes the parochialism evident in the literature, instancing the neglect in the English language journals until recently of the Japanese and

the Swedish epidemics. Before assimilating amply documented experience, each country in turn appears to wait until its own national crisis develops. Different medical disciplines likewise fail to share information. International cross-disciplinary symposia and books like this one promote wider understanding, and more effective and legislative policies.

H. J. WALTON

MODERN RADIOTHERAPY AND ONCOLOGY: CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM TUMOURS Edited by D. J. Deeley. (Pp. 323; illustrated; £7.) Butterworths: London. 1974.

'We really know very little about the irradiation of cerebral tumours', writes the editor with disarming modesty. Nevertheless, he and his 13 fellow contributors from centres in various parts of the world have provided much useful information and many references, not only to radiotherapy, but also to the wider aspects of the pathology, diagnosis, and management of brain tumours.

The index is a good one, painstakingly prepared, but, as with many other multiple author books, much more might have been done to edit and coordinate overlapping contributions by different authors. For example, sections on radioactive brain scans, on pituitary adenomas, on craniopharyngioma, and on spinal tumours, appear in different parts of the book and there are hardly any cross-references in the text. It would be very helpful to the reader if he was given an occasional footnote. 'See page 153' ... 'for a different view on this question see chapter 6'. Something of that sort.

Tumour histology, diagnostic radiology, and raised intracranial pressure are all well handled. Henk's chapter on radiotherapy for the whole central nervous system (usually for medulloblastoma) is especially good. Deeley makes many cogent points in his own three chapters. Kramer argues powerfully for radiotherapy as the main line of treatment for craniopharyngioma.

No editor can please every reader, but for my money a second edition of this helpful volume might well consider omitting or shortening the sections on ultra-sound, on electroencephalography, and on scanning after irradiation. Giving in their place a chapter on the side-effects and dangers of radiation (bringing together the data at present scattered