

PRE AND POSTSYNAPTIC RECEPTORS Edited by E. Usdin and W. E. Bunney, Jr. (Pp. 337; illustrated; \$29.75.) Marcell Dekker: New York. 1975.

This book presents a recent account of research techniques and current theories on the biochemical, pharmacological, and neurophysiological aspects of pre- and postsynaptic neuronal neurotransmitter mechanisms. The overall presentation is good, notably the scientific content, reference sections terminating each chapter and a concise subject index. However, the presentation of the tables and figures is occasionally spoiled by lengthy legends.

The book is primarily concerned with dopaminergic neurotransmitter mechanisms, particularly receptor-ligand binding and subsequent role in 'feed-back' mechanisms. However, the book is somewhat incomplete in that cholinergic receptor mechanisms have been omitted from the text. Nevertheless, with the current interest in catecholamine neurotransmitters and their purported involvement with neuronal metabolic homeostasis, the mechanistic approach of the book should appeal to the postgraduate biochemist, pharmacologist, and neurophysiologist.

The applied clinical content of the book is very interesting, especially with respect to the mode and site of action of psychotic drugs. Of particular interest is the use of physiological and biochemical preparations in the initial assessment of drug interaction with axodendritic and axosomatic 'receptors' and the possible implications in clinical management. The latter aspects of the book should attract the attention of clinicians and medical students interested in drug interaction, and 'feed-back' mechanisms in the central and autonomic nervous system.

D. REES

INTRACRANIAL PRESSURE 2 PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON INTRACRANIAL PRESSURE Edited by N. Lundberg, U. Ponten, and M. Brock. (Pp. 527; DM 72; \$31.00.) Springer: Berlin. 1975.

Symposia centred on a particular technique or measurement can often result in a more cohesive multidisciplinary meeting than those set up with the avowed intention of bringing together different disciplines. This has been a feature of the cerebral blood flow meetings in recent years, and interest in intracranial pressure seems to be providing a similar rallying point for both basic and clinical scientists. This book reports the 2nd International Symposium, held in Lund last summer. Its appearance, between hard covers, well under a year after the meeting, is due to having used offset printing of typed pages; this is to be commended to future organisers of such

symposia. Each section has an introduction by the chairman of the session, who includes comments on relevant points raised in the discussion, which is not reported verbatim. There is a great deal of new work briefly reported here, with good line diagrams and references. With over 100 papers, titles cannot usefully be mentioned here, but the main topics included CSF dynamics, pathogenesis of hydrocephalus, distribution of pressures within the intracranial cavity, interaction between ICP and respiration, cerebrovascular function, cerebral blood flow, metabolism. Many of these papers referred to experimental work, but there were clinical papers on volume-pressure responses, on the influence of anaesthetic and other drugs and on the controversial issue of long-term controlled ventilation. A final session reviewed the present place of intracranial pressure monitoring in clinical management.

BRYAN JENNETT

ATLAS OF NORMAL VERTEBRAL ANGIOGRAMS By P. Ross and G. H. du Boulay. (Pp. 126; illustrated; £15.) Butterworths: London. 1976.

Small expanding lesions in the posterior fossa can be localised by vertebral angiography without recourse to encephalography, but recognition of the displacements requires a knowledge of the normal anatomy and common variants. In this slim volume the first 26 pages consist of descriptive text, references, and nine full-page perspective drawings. The remaining 98 pages are life-size subtraction prints of vertebral angiograms in which the vessels are identified by numbers. The key to these annotations is contained in two coloured fold-out sections, one at the beginning for arteries in red, and the other at the end for veins in blue, an arrangement which was found to be very practical. Computed tomography may reduce the need for vertebral angiography but is unlikely to eliminate it entirely; therefore radiologists and others interested in interpretation should have this book readily available.

J. L. STEVEN

HANDBOOK OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGY Vol. 15: THE EPILEPSIES Edited by O. Magnus and A. M. Lorentz de Haas. (Pp. 860; illustrated; Dfl. 255.00.) North Holland: Amsterdam. 1974.

As would be expected in a prestige book written by well-known authorities, this volume contains some excellent studies on the epilepsies. Its main defect is the attempt to be comprehensive, including all attempts at classification. There is something to be said for each, but for practical purposes it is best to accept one classification, and construct a book around it. This is difficult to achieve with a panel of experts, and the editorial task was made more

difficult by the untimely deaths of Dr Lorentz de Haas, Professor Bremond, and two of the contributors, Dr R. M. Norman and Professor Dr H. H. Landolt.

A criticism of all volumes of the *Handbook* is that, apparently with the purpose of making each volume self-contained, authors have been permitted to include much material which is covered more fully in other volumes. There is no cross-index, and the supplementary material is sometimes inaccurate. An example of this is the attribution of subacute sclerosing panencephalitis to infection by the rubella virus (p. 351).

Chapters on treatment and prognosis are useful, but one cannot find clear guidance on withdrawal of therapy. The chapter on electroencephalography is well-balanced, indeed one of the best practical accounts available.

J. A. SIMPSON

HANDBOOK OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGY VOL. 16.
TUMOURS OF THE BRAIN AND SKULL. PART I.
Edited by P. J. Vinken and G. W. Bruyn. (Pp. 748; illustrated; Dfl. 228.00; US \$87.70.) North Holland: Amsterdam. 1974.

The present volume of the *Handbook*, first of three on cerebral tumours, has very valuable chapters on the biology and epidemiology of brain tumours, but it is largely devoted to intracranial hypertension, brain oedema, the differential diagnosis of intracranial space-occupying lesions, and phenomena related to tumours such as epilepsy, papilloedema, acoustic-vestibular disorders, psychiatric and endocrinological aspects, and to diagnostic techniques such as CSF examination, EEG, echoencephalography, isotope scanning, biopsy, and neuroradiology (without the EMI scan). The latter chapters are very good but might well have been diverted to a separate volume on diagnostic techniques in neurology. Until the final index is available it is difficult to know where to look for the very valuable chapters in this series.

Production is excellent but the publishers might note that most errors of translation, or of proof reading, occur in the legends to figures and tables.

J. A. SIMPSON

PSYCHOLOGY By R. Brown and R. J. Herrnstein.
(Pp. 762; illustrated; £6.50.) Methuen: London. 1975.

This book grew out of a series of lectures given by the authors at Harvard in 1970 and 1971 to non-specialist students. The topics dealt with, therefore, were those that might have interested or stimulated a student before beginning a specialist course in psychology, and the book is clearly aimed at introductory psychology students. The book does not follow a

formal plan dealing with each area of psychology in turn; instead each chapter is complete in itself and may be read as a separate essay. This approach has much to recommend it, given a creative selection of topics, and an interesting treatment of each topic. Unfortunately, with one or two exceptions, the selection of topics is anything but creative, being somewhat pedestrian, and a number of the topics, such as motivation or learning, are dealt with in a way more appropriate to psychology of the 50s or 60s rather than the 70s. There are, of course, exceptions, and the chapter on language is both fascinating and up to date, including, as it does, the important experiments on language usage in chimpanzees.

The book could not really be recommended for purchase by students, although students would certainly be advised to read the chapters on language and schizophrenia for well-rounded and interesting essays, and the chapter on psychotherapy for an example of blinkered conclusions based on inadequate evidence.

D. NEIL BROOKS

THE PSYCHOBIOLOGY OF DEPRESSION Edited by J. Mendels. (Pp. 175; illustrated; £8.10.) Spectrum Publications: New York. 1975.

At first sight this book looks topical, original, and important. It appears to consist of a series of chapters commissioned from well-known research workers in various fields of biological study of depression. Nothing in the foreword or in the publisher's blurb contradicts this impression. Yet the book reads like conference proceedings. For example, chapters are very uneven in merit: some are scholarly reviews of the literature, some are reviews of the authors' own work, at least one is an account of experimental work more suited to a scientific journal. Then we note, from footnotes, that two of the chapters were presented at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1974. Finally, in his postscript, the editor tells us that the book consists of 'papers presented at this symposium'.

Whether symposium proceedings should be published obviously depends on the quality of the papers. Some of the papers are worthwhile, bringing together research data not previously so conveniently assembled. Others are more ephemeral. Because this was not really a carefully planned book, the editor has felt obliged to write a final chapter to fill in some gaps.

All in all, the book is probably just sufficiently useful for librarians to purchase a copy. Nevertheless, surely a volume of conference proceedings, however memorable, should always plainly be labelled as such on the front cover?

J. L. GIBBONS