cedents of mesial temporal sclerosis and cerebral hemiatrophy (Falconer) lend weight to Margaret Lennox-Buchthal's plea for the organisation of health services in every community to prevent long febrile convulsions. The reader will notice dispute regarding the importance of pre-existing brain lesions, and whether (and how) age and sex determine the side of acquired cerebral damage. There is a tendency to deny the possibility of heterogeneity of pathogenesis of febrile convulsions, and implicit assumption that, in the Gastaut sense, all convulsions are epileptic rather than anoxic. Occasional errors—for example, Fig. 1, p. 328—have crept in but are remarkably few for a symposium of this kind.

This stimulating book is expensive for the private book shelf but it should find a place in all neurological and paediatric libraries.

J. B. P. STEPHENSON

Encyclopaedic Handbook of Medical Psychology Edited by S. Krauss. (Pp. 585; illustrated; £13.50.) Butterworth: London. 1976.

Conceived by the late Stephen Krauss, psychiatrist and philosopher, this volume aims, 'in the best tradition of Encyclopaedists from Diderot to the present day, to bring together . . . articles which, when taken together, would mirror the face of psychological medicine as it exists today.' Alas, the days of Diderot are long since past—even the three-volume *Encyclopaedia of Psychology* (1972) does not succeed in covering the whole of a narrower field—and the direction 'take together' is one which can hardly be fulfilled for 573 pages of articles from *Accident Proneness to Yoga Therapy*.

The collection ranges from authoritative distillations of standard topics in psychiatry—for example, *Anxiety* by Lader; *Developmental Dysphasia* by Espir and Rose; *Intelligence* by Vernon; *Skill* by Welford, and many others—to idiosyncratic articles, presumably by Krauss's acquaintances, on topics of their choice—for example, *Artistic Experience* by Helen Rosenau, *Economic Behaviour* by Hultman, *Folklore* by Seguin, *Hope* by Stotland, *Speech and Reason* by Abse—which give rise to some odd juxtapositions, such as *Child Guidance Clinics* (Adlerian) followed by

Child Guidance Clinics (Great Britain), and include the entertaining suggestion by Allen that preventive measures for sexual deviations include 'weaning after breast feeding at the proper time, normal feeding with hard biscuits to bite, and no excessive interest in the bowels by the parents'.

Between these extremes lie summaries by authorities which are inadequate—for example, half a page on *Autistic Children* by Wing—and others which are (predictably) biased—for example, *Child Development* by Anna Freud (which is, however, compensated for by a masterly view of *Life-span Psychology* by Charlotte Bühler). These considerably diminish any interest, or use, which the volume might have, a diminution which is emphasised by numerous omissions from 'the face of psychological medicine as it exists today'. For instance, does a neurologist want to find out something about abreaction? He will not find it here; nor anything on dreaming; nor will the psychiatrist find any account of the various aspects of psychopharmacology, save a description of hallucinogens by Buckman.

The most interesting articles in the book are the unexpected excursions—Abercrombie on *Psychological Aspects of Architecture*, Taylor on *Environmental Factors*, three articles on *Culture and Society*, to name but a few. It would perhaps have been better to expand these into a *Festschrift* for Krauss, rather than to have persevered with this very uneven patchwork.

JOHN MCFIE

Acupuncture Anesthesia in the People's Republic of China (Pp. 73; \$5.75.) National Academy of Sciences: Washington. 1976.

Recurrently, the Western world discovers China; and whenever this happens, they turn to each other and say 'How amazing! The Chinese treat disease by just digging needles in'. A short and interesting report of this repeated awareness of acupuncture was written by McMenemey as an editorial for the *British Medical Journal* (22 December 1973). Let us hope that the present interest in acupuncture has come to stay. The amount of research now being undertaken in the United States into the interactions of different inputs from

various parts of the body is starting to be rewarding; and that is what acupuncture analgesia is all about.

The short pamphlet being reviewed here is a report of a group of North American neurologists, neurophysiologists, and anaesthetists who visited China to observe operations being done under acupuncture analgesia. It does not concern other aspects of acupuncture, such as the treatment of chronic painful conditions or various diseases. This short report has taken two years to come out, and so most of the information in it is now out-of-date.

Apparently well-planned research on the physiology of acupuncture analgesia, used instead of general anaesthesia, is going on in China. It has not yet been established what peripheral receptors are involved, nor what the central mechanisms are. The American visiting group reported that 'the techniques being employed are generally comparable to those being applied to the problem of pain in research centers in the West and the Chinese investigators were fully cognisant of the problems and current states of research on the neurophysiology of pain'.

For acupuncture analgesia, choice of points was not standardised. The group reported that 'an operation might be performed with needles inserted into the extremities or the lumbar region in one hospital and the same operation performed in another hospital with needles inserted in totally different sites, such as the pinna of the ear'. The needles were usually 'inserted into the underlying muscle mass'; and the muscles were always contracting repetitively. Electric stimulation of the needles was used; the pulse duration 0.1 ms, voltage 0.25 to 48 V, and the rate started off at about 3 Hz and was then increased up to 50 Hz; some acupuncturists increased it to 200 Hz. Acupuncture analgesia was not used on children under the age of 15 years.

Those who read this pamphlet will be left in the same mental state as I think the visiting group was left in, and which was well put to me by one of a group of Danish doctors who studied acupuncture in China. 'When I went to China I was confused. And when I left, I was still confused. But at a higher level'.

P. W. NATHAN