

Book reviews

Clinical Management of Pituitary Disorders Edited by GT Tindall and WF Collins (pp 456; \$53.72.) New York: Raven Press, 1979.

The detection and management of pituitary tumours has made great progress in the last twenty years. Readily available hormone assessment now allows the precise identification of various hypo-secreting and hyper-secreting syndromes, and provides a measure of the effectiveness of treatment. Previously unsuspected tumours are revealed by greatly improved radiological methods. Surgical procedures with the operating microscope have undergone increasing refinement, and the transphenoidal approach has been the subject of a dramatic revival.

Paradoxically this increased activity in detection and assessment of pituitary disorders has not simplified patient management. Whether it be for the relief of mass effect, or for the reduction of hyper-secretion, treatment remains controversial. The introduction of bromocriptine has added yet another therapeutic weapon, which will have to be measured against the established techniques of surgery and radiotherapy. It is therefore appropriate that the fifth volume in the series "Seminars in Neurological Surgery" should be concerned with presenting the current state of thinking on the clinical aspects of the pituitary gland, as viewed through a variety of disciplines. Problems in diagnosis, therapy and evaluation are examined in depth.

Though the majority of the contributions are by neurological surgeons, this volume is not a surgical text. Apart from the first chapter, which concerns the microsurgical anatomy of the sphenoid and sellar regions, only three might be considered exclusively surgical. After reviews of current knowledge of neuro-endocrinology and neuropathology, the intricacies of present-day neuroradiographic assessments are explained in detail. There is a particularly valuable chapter on the clinical assessment of the patient with the apparently asymptomatic enlarged sella turcica. Medical and surgical contributions on the various hyper-secretion syndromes combine to provide balanced and convincing appreciations of the differing

problems and their management. The case for conventional radiotherapy, as the safest treatment of all, is well presented, and its occasional complications are not overlooked. The special problems of invasive tumours and recurrent tumours receive individual consideration. Finally, there is a selected review of current treatment for "the most baffling problem" of craniopharyngioma, and an assessment of the current status of hypophysectomy in breast and prostatic cancer.

This is a most enjoyable book—the style is easy and remarkably uniform throughout, considering the multiple authorship. The individual contributions contain a wealth of supporting facts and figures, conveying the confidence and authority of those who know their subject. The editors are to be congratulated in achieving their aim—they have produced an excellent and most valuable reference volume, for neurosurgeons, endocrinologists and all others interested in the pituitary gland and its disorders.

JJ MACCABE

EEG Recording by ML Hector (pp 168; £9.95) Sevenoaks: Butterworths, 1980.

This book is the result of Miss Hector's long experience, sound judgement and fluent style. Although originally published in France and aimed primarily at EEG technicians, it contains a great deal of information with both practical and theoretical wisdom, very useful also to medical readers. The translators should be congratulated for their excellent work and Butterworth's printing and presentation are particularly good. The emphasis on the "dynamic aspects of EEG investigations" is particularly welcome. There are still too many doctors who report on EEG whether in France or the rest of the world, who forget to help and guide the EEG technician in the selection and modification of techniques towards a fuller understanding of the many ways in which brain function may be altered. Such "dynamic aspects" are essential in the evaluation of differential diagnostic aspects in brain disorders.

In addition to the EEG aspects and the useful comments on 85 records illustrated in the text, Miss Hector

briefly discusses polygraphic recordings, electro-oculograms, surface electro-myograms, electro-dermograms, respiratory excursions, movements of various kind, etc. Techniques such as EEG telemetry, evoked potentials of various kinds and event related potential changes are also briefly described. The text is primarily practical and on the whole very helpful, in spite of the very few references.

G PAMPIGLIONE

Psychiatric Diagnosis by DW Goodwin and SB Guze (pp 254; £4.95). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

This is the second, revised edition of a most useful and reasonably priced short textbook of psychiatry. It is an exposé of the approach of the Washington University Department of Psychiatry at St. Louis. The St Louis group have always stressed the importance of diagnosis and of reliable diagnostic criteria in psychiatry. Their methods include careful clinical description of patients, long term follow-up and detailed investigation of family history.

The book contains twelve sections, each dealing with one of the psychiatric syndromes recognised as independent disorders by the St Louis group. A great deal of "hard" information is presented briefly and lucidly, with very extensive reference to the literature. There is very little on psychodynamic or other theories of causation, although key references are provided. There are, in the case of each syndrome, brief sections on clinical management, again with extensive citations of the literature. An appendix contains a vigorous defence of the concept of disease in psychiatry together with research diagnostic criteria for all of the syndromes described in the book.

This little book provides an introduction to the main psychiatric disorders and it is an excellent source of references to the research literature. There is very little theorising, there is no room for detailed discussion of contentious issues (such as the classification of depression) and some important topics (such as parasuicide) are not considered at all. But within its own limitations the book can be warmly recommended.

JL GIBBONS