Book reviews

of a symposium on: "Addiction: Biochemical Aspects of Dependence and Brain Damage" held at Magdalen College, Oxford in September 1979. As is to be expected from a multi-author book the readability, interest and quality of the different contributions are variable. The problems of alcohol addiction receive far more extensive coverage than those due to drug abuse. The first part of the volume is devoted to the biochemical and physiological mechanisms, and topics dealt with include the role of catecholamine-derived alkaloids and opioid peptides in dependence, the effects of alcohol on cell membranes, possibly mechanisms of tissue damage and the effects of alcohol on different neurotransmitter systems. My favourite chapter in this section is by Littleton who reviews lucidly the changes in the cell membrane in the acute and chronic stages of ethanol administration proposing an attractive model for tolerance and dependence. The second part of the book deals with clinical investigations and here two studies, one Swedish and one British, using computed tomography and psychometric tests are given ample space. These two chapters summarise the present knowledge in the field and, unlike many others, offer material hitherto unpublished. Other useful chapters in this section are by Gottfries who deals with monoamine changes in alcoholics, and by Tarter who gives a thorough review of psychological deficits in alcoholics.

In short, a timely book of variable quality. The extensive bibliography and some of the well written chapters dealing with topics of current interest should make it interesting for those working in the field of alcoholism and drug abuse.

MARIA RON

Advances in Epileptology: The XIth Epilepsy International Symposium (Florence, Italy) Edited by R Cauger, F Angeleri, and JK Penry (pp 510; \$65.25) New York: Raven Press, 1980. This book is a compendium of papers given at the XIth Epilepsy International Symposium in Florence in 1979 which the editors felt were significant. The topics included range through the whole spectrum of epilepsy from the experimental to the social. The editors have

done a magnificent job in their editing and indexing of the papers and also in the speed with which they have produced the book. The result is a book of high quality with topical and relevant papers on *all* aspects of epilepsy. It is a gold mine of up-to-date references and a treasure trove of ideas for future research projects. There is, however, one drawback and that is the price. Anybody who can buy this book through a library should do so. I hope it will find its way into every major medical library in the country. For each individual, the decision is more difficult. I had decided that the £40 would be well spent, although I am now relieved of this financial obligation as I have a review copy. However, for those of you who have not been so fortunate as to obtain a review copy, if you are involved at the cutting edge of the science of epilepsy or are interested in an overall view of the present position of epilepsy research and you are likely to make use of this information on a day to day basis, then the book is a "must."

If, on the other hand, you require it simply as a reference manual, then a copy in your local library may well be sufficient, although I very much doubt that you will have much chance of getting access to it, as it will, I am sure, prove very popular and for the next year or so it is not likely to be left on the shelf. It is, however, worthwhile mentioning that this book is part of a series and back volumes relating to the VIIIth, IXth and Xth Epilepsy Symposia are available and these would do well beside this volume on your library shelves.

PBC FENWICK

Medical Neurology 3rd edition By John Gilroy and John Stirling Meyer (pp 787; £21) Macmillan Publishing Co: New York, 1980.

The requirement for a third edition within eleven years indicates that this has become a standard textbook of neurology and this will not surprise those already familiar with its content. The original format is preserved and retains the concise description of the neurological examination which is followed by an adequate summary of the main features of paediatric neurology which is useful for those not actively engaged in this specialty. There is a

useful and comprehensive classification of demyelinating diseases and in this context the leucodystrophies and lipid storage diseases are covered in depth. The chapter on cerebrovascular disease has a very useful precis of the relevant anatomy of cerebral blood supply. Management of transient ischaemic attacks has been revised and whilst aspirin receives unqualified support, anticoagulants are now properly relegated to the status of "unproven hypothesis." Adequate control of hypertension is firmly accorded the most important role in the overall medical management.

There has also been a significant revision in diseases of the peripheral nerves and muscles. The entrapment neuropathies have been expanded with considerable benefit and the diagnosis of muscle disease by histochemical techniques has been brought up to date. Both are welcome additions. The illustrations throughout the text are clear and well chosen and are all of good quality. The one exception to this is the reproduction of CT scans. In common with most publications which include examples of CT scans one is forced to wonder whether diagrammatic representation would not be preferable to the original until the problems of reproduction are overcome. This is only a minor quibble since the textbook can be recommended to all residents and indeed to all medical readers who require rapid access to a concise and clearly expressed description of the majority of the important diseases of the central nervous system.

EC HUTCHINSON

Neurology for Psychiatrists By Charles E Wells and Gary W Duncan (pp 233; \$27.50) Philadelphia: F A Davis & Co, 1980.

This book about psychiatry and neurology gives a brief synopsis of some selected topics and can be read in two or three evenings. On the whole, the standard of psychiatry is much better than that of neurology and some of the suggestions made about methods of clinical examination appear slightly bizarre. As examples of these, it is suggested that in testing stance, the patient should stand on each foot individually for 10 or so seconds and if the gait does not fit any well recognised pattern, the likely diagnosis is one of