Book reviews

High Velocity Missile Wounds By MS Owen-Smith (pp 179; £12.75) London: Edward Arnold, 1981.

Professor Owen-Smith's book on high velocity missile wounds is a short book which is extremely readable, providing the reader with an account of the historical aspects of pathophysiology and treatment of missile wounds. Lord Marlow in his Foreword points to the importance of such knowledge to all those dealing with casualties because of the increase in "peace time" violence as a result of such injuries. Despite all the recent literature on such wounds, it is still fairly common to find medical colleagues who imagine that a missile wound has the same characteristics as a knife wound or a depressed fracture, and this book will quickly disabuse the reader of such errors.

There is an excellent historical section and this is followed by three sections, one on the mechanism of injury, a second on the principles of treatment and the third section on a brief synopsis on the management of injuries to specific areas. There are good diagrams and illustrations. The section on the mechanism of injury explains, with great clarity, wound ballistics and the mechanisms of injury; the effects of explosion are also well described. In the section on the principles of treatment, primary care of the wounded appears to be a précis of the instructions for Casualty Clearing Stations, much of the advice pertaining to "field" conditions. The general first aid principles are adequately covered apart from one typographical error in the use of blood transfusion in the first ten minutes after injury. The problem of mass casualties is covered, perhaps, too briefly and some more up-to-date references with regard to the evaluation of the injured from the American literature would be helpful. In the third section on regional injuries, injuries of the trunk and limbs receive more attention than the rest of the body, understandably from a general surgical point of view, and also from the likely site of injury from a bullet. The more specialised areas such as eyes, ears, brain, spinal cord, are dealt with very briefly.

For whom is the book written? Professor Owen-Smith feels that all medical personnel, particularly surgeons in training, should have a knowledge of high velocity missile wounds and blast in-

juries and this book will certainly act as a primer in this topic and dispel some of the myths around their treatment held by the medical profession. It will not be enough, however, for the definitive treatment of any such injury. Such detailed instructions would have required a considerably larger volume, multiple authors, and would be considerably more expensive and consequently less widely read.

H ALAN CROCKARD

Management of Acute Head Injuries

By R Hayward (pp 100; £4.80) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1980.

The time was right for a new, simple guide for use by the orthopaedic and general surgical registrars who are responsible for the management of so many head injured patients. This book aims to fill this gap and contains much sensible advice for the non-neurological specialist. All sections contain sound guidance about the practical details of management. The author is good at describing what to look for, how to look and what to do about the findings but is less convincing when explaining why things should be done. Indeed, the book as a whole makes more sense than its parts, because the arrangement of subjects means that cross-reference, both forward and backward, is frequently necessary. The chapters on assessment, prediction, treatment and observation precede the account of the complications of injury, even though the early detection and treatment of the latter is the key to management. Cerebral oedema is made to seem to be the root of many of the evils after head injury, despite our ignorance about its real frequency and about its importance. Recent work has vindicated the author's commendable caution about the use of steroids and this might have been extended to the use of mannitol and glycerol. There is appropriate guidance about limitations of investigations such as CT scanning and ICP monitoring, as well as an emphasis upon their undoubted value. The author includes a classification of head injuries based upon four grades of severity. His system would be difficult to apply in practice because it does not incorporate some common patterns of injury; fortunately, little use is made of the system in subsequent sections. From a surgical aspect, the distinction between closed and com-

pound depressed fractures of the skull is not made sufficiently clear. It would also have been appropriate to draw attention to the relative infrequency of extradural haematomas as compared with intradural lesions because operation for the latter is certainly beyond the capabilities of the surgeons for whom the book is intended. In future, many of these doctors will be carrying Mr Hayward's book in their pockets when dealing with all sorts of head injured patients. I predict that neurosurgeons will find that this will do no harm and that if the practical advice it contains is heeded, the effect will usually be to improve a patient's management. If some of the concepts it conveys provoke constructive dialogue between neurosurgeons and primary surgeons, this can only be beneficial, as the author rightly points out.

GRAHAM TEASDALE

Psychological Medicine: An Introduction to Psychiatry, 9th ed, by Desmond Curran, Maurice Partridge, Peter Storey (pp 437; £8.50) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1980.

This is the ninth edition of *Psychological Medicine*; the first was published in 1943. In the intervening years psychiatry has emerged from the dark ages, although it would take a bold man to complete the historical analogy in terms of its present exact whereabouts. The latest version contains a number of improvements, most notably a chapter on psychogeriatrics (though at nine pages this would bear considerable expansion), an updated section on the aetiology of schizophrenia, and an expanded chapter on the psychotherapies. Inevitably, perhaps, in a book that has been revised so many times, the seams are apt to show. Some pages gleam with recently acquired information; others have a distinctly hand-me-down quality. A detailed description of Kretschmer's body types, complete with cartoon illustrations, can be found in one chapter; in another, the complexities of neurotransmitter theory. Present day medical students could probably do with more of the latter.

These quibbles aside the book remains a model of no-nonsense British eclecticism; down to earth and pragmatic are the adjectives which most immediately come to mind. However, it may be criticised in terms of both scope and cost. There is no section on child psychiatry and in this it compares unfavourably with most of its

competitors. Students should not be expected to buy a separate book on this subject. Likewise, at £8.50 it occupies a position at the costlier end of the paperback market.

B TOONE

Psychiatric Presentations of Medical Illness: Somatopsychic Disorders Edited by Richard CW Hall (pp 406; £18.95) Lancaster: MTP Press Ltd, 1981.

In this book, Richard Hall has assembled a group of writers to present the various psychiatric manifestations of a large number of medical illnesses. As professor of both medicine and psychiatry he would seem to be an admirable person to do this, collating information which has largely evolved from the rapid expansion of psychiatric liaison services over the past three decades. There are four sections to the book. In the first, a brief overview for the setting of the rest of the book is given, which is followed by discussion of particular psychiatric symptoms, such as depression, anxiety and hallucinations, which are frequently noted to be associated with somatic disorders. The third section covers the psychiatric presentations of specific disorders, including infectious diseases, endocrine dysfunction, cardiovascular, pulmonary and gastrointestinal diseases, haematological disorders, seizure disorders, and disturbances related to fluid and electrolyte imbalance and heavy metal intoxication. The final section reviews psychiatric symptomatology induced by drugs, including psychotropic drugs.

Overall, the book is a mine of references, and many of the chapters provide extremely useful and up-to-date reviews that a number of physicians, including psychiatrists, will call on for information. Not only is the commonplace discussed, but the interested can find information on psychiatric aspects of hypophosphataemia, Menkes' kinky-hair disease, and the rare but interesting Manganic madness. A difficulty with this sort of book is that, for example, the symptoms of depression are repeated in several different chapters, and some aggressive editing could have shortened the overall size without loss of content. The most useful section is undoubtedly the third, and the value of the last

section on drugs is diminished since the large appendix listing many drugs and their psychiatric side effects is without references, and in many cases only gives overall generalisations about complications that are useless.

The reason why this book should be on every psychiatrist's desk is clearly laid out by the editor in Chapter 1. According to his review of the literature, 66% of psychiatrists do not perform physical examinations, and only 32% feel competent to perform them. This book testifies to the high incidence of medical disorders that lead to psychopathology, and even if not encouraged to read its contents, on seeing its cover in front of them the psychiatrist may be reminded that primarily he is a physician and that he ignores this fact at his peril.

MICHAEL TRIMBLE

Progress in Multiple Sclerosis Research Edited by HJ Bauer, S. Poser and G Ritter (pp 677; DM79, US\$46.70. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1980.

This compendium of 103 papers represents the contributions of the International Federation of Multiple Sclerosis Societies to a symposium held in Gottingen in 1978. It should be read backwards starting with the concluding remarks by Bauer who helpfully summarises each contribution in about two sentences. Work on experimental allergic encephalomyelitis is kept going by interest in the chronic relapsing form of the disease which does not seem to be caused by myelin basic protein but by some other, as yet unidentified antigen. The relationship between such immune mediated inflammation and viral infection is discussed with respect to the demyelination caused by virus induced destruction of oligodendrocytes infected by mouse hepatitis virus. New techniques for detecting viral genomic information are being brought to bear in the search for the cause of multiple sclerosis but still show no real signs of reward. The oligoclonal bands of IgG in the cerebrospinal fluid continue to provide a diagnostic aid and to fascinate research workers who, however, have not yet discovered the antigens against which these presumed antibodies are directed. It seems increasingly likely that they

represent the products of non specifically activated plasma cells or lymphocytes which have become segregated in the central nervous system compartment. Lack of understanding of the aetiology of multiple sclerosis has not deterred clinicians from trying out various means of manipulating the immune response. Reports of prolonged azathioprine treatment, unfortunately not always well controlled, suggest a reduction in relapse rate and rate of progression of disease, particularly in younger patients with shorter duration of disease. These and other matters are brought together in a single, beautifully presented and, by current standards, reasonably priced volume. Although most, perhaps all, the worthwhile information has already been published elsewhere the research worker will find this an essential volume for his library bookshelf and many neurologists will want to study the evidence about immunosuppressive treatment themselves.

RAC HUGHES

Paediatric Neuromuscular Diseases KF Swaiman and FS Wright (pp 283; £27.00) London: CV Mosby Co, 1979.

The authors of this book, who have already produced a major textbook of paediatric neurology, have recognised the real need for a comprehensive conventional style of textbook in the more limited field of children's neuromuscular disorders. They have amassed a good deal of information, on the very numerous disorders of nerve and muscle which may affect children, and have prefaced it with over 40 pages on physiology, examination techniques and investigations. Few disorders are omitted but they do not grapple with controversial problems (for example on nosology or management) in a way that will give helpful guidance or stimulation and the whole atmosphere of the book suggests professional authorship rather than specialised clinical experience. The authors have not grasped the crucial importance of genetic counselling in the inherited neuromuscular disorders and their comments are often so vague, irrelevant or inaccurate as to make the book positively dangerous if it is used for guidance in this area. Otherwise, it is a useful if unexciting compilation.

D GARDNER-MEDWICK