sory treatment; for example much of a chapter entitled "The Mechanism of Conduction and Transmission" could have been written a decade ago and presents as fact a hypothesis concerning transmitter release long since discredited. The neuropeptides are given only a brief mention in the main text and about a page in an appendix devoted to recent developments. This and other omissions put the book well back from the frontiers of neurobiology. There is, however, an author index and an excellent subject index.

RICHARD RODNIGHT


This volume is the proceedings of the 24th Annual OHOLO Biological Conference held in Israel in 1979, the subject being "Neuroactive Compounds and their Cell Receptors." Part of this meeting has already been published as the Neurobiology of Cholinergic and Adrenergic Transmitters (monographs in Neurol Sciences Vol 7). The book starts with an unwanted six page listing the participants of the meeting and the previous congresses held. The editors use the term "multidisciplinary" to cover the production of another unhomogeneous series of papers arising from a meeting—the necessity to publish being the apparent driving force. There are 10 papers on peptides from a variety of view points, one paper on benzodiazepines, three relating to different aspects of schizophrenia, and one dealing with purinergic transmission. Indeed, between the excellent start by Kosterlitz and the distinguished finale by Burnstock, lie a series of undistinguished papers which are unrepresentative of the field supposedly covered. The authors appear to have been limited by an allotment of approximately 10 pages each. This type of limit can thwart even the most illustrious authors. Not a book for the library or for the individual. All the information contained can be found elsewhere and it would take a brave individual or a rich establishment to afford the exorbitant £25 required for this 160-page work.

PG JENN

Cerebral Vasospasm edited by DJ Boullin (pp 337; £15.00) Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1980.

This book deals with the clinical, pharmacological and pathological aspects of cerebral arterial spasm. The main emphasis of course is on cerebral vasospasm after subarachnoid hemorrhage due to a ruptured aneurysm, but the book also contains information relevant to head trauma, migraine and meningitis. Section I gives the historical perspectives of vasospasm and emphasizes its association with a poor prognosis. There follows a chapter by J Mohan outlining the neurosurgeon's view of the relationship of vasospasm to surgical outcome. The chapter by George du Boulay on "Angiography—the radiologist's view" is without doubt one of the best in the book. His other chapter on "Cerebral blood flow in man and animals" also exhibits a clear and lucid style. This chapter deals with CBF methodology and CBF measurement in subarachnoid haemorrhage. I found it slightly curious that Dr Boullin in his chapter on "Principles of control of cerebral arterial blood flow" felt it necessary to deal with methodology as well. Furthermore surely auto-regulation means the intrinsic ability of an organ to regulate its own blood supply in the absence of the autonomic nervous system? I can understand that if one firmly believes that prostacyclin is the important regulator of the cerebral circulation it is inconvenient to quote the literature extensively on the controversial matter of neurological control. However half a page or so hardly does justice to the complexity of this topic. If space were at a premium then all reference to Poiseille's law could well have been omitted. This law only applies to tubes of constant diameter and is in any event not applicable where flow is pulsatile. On the other hand Dr Boullin's chapters on the pharmacological basis of spasm and clinical aspects are really quite good. A description of pathological changes in arteries after aneurysm rupture and other head injuries completes the first section. The second section which is entirely by Dr Boullin concentrates on recent advances in prostanoid research, the discovery of the dilator prostanoid prostacyclin and its potential role in the physiological control mechanism of cerebral blood flow and in the clinical treatment of vasospasm. New methods of drug administration to neurosurgical patients are described. The book concludes with an evaluation of model systems useful in the stimulation of cerebral vasospasm and its relief.

This book should be read by anyone with an interest in this important topic. At £15 a copy many will be tempted to obtain the book for their own personal library.

IM JAMES


Donald Goodwin is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Kansas. His research on the genetics of alcoholism has won international acclaim. Before turning to medicine he was a professional journalist. The book is of interest therefore both in relation to content, and in the art form of popular presentation. As regards content, Goodwin lays out much information which should be useful to the intended readership—"people who worry about drinking—their own or somebody else's."

The implicit framework of understanding which is offered is, though, essentially the traditional one of "alcohol as a disease," with lesser emphasis on that great array of alcohol-related troubles which make up the greater part of the community's adverse experience with this drug. The author is against population control of alcohol-consumption, by tax or licensing, as a prevention measure. Inevitably "the facts" are as it transpires not facts, but one distinguished author's interpretation of reality, considerably influenced by the orthodoxies of the old-time American alcoholism establishment.

As regards style, the exposition is free-flowing and refreshingly devoid of jargon. Any medical writer interested in the art of popularisation could turn to this book for a tutorial.

GRIFFITH EDWARDS


The management of head injured patients has altered dramatically in the last decade and is still changing. Many