

Book reviews

Handbook of Affective Disorders. Edited by ES Paykel. (Pp 457; £25.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1982.

Handbooks, annual reviews and journals devoted to schizophrenia are a long-established feature of the psychiatric library and only recently have the affective disorders challenged this pre-eminence. The massive increase in research literature and other territorial gains made by the affective illnesses make a handbook devoted to them timely.

Forty-six authors contribute thirty-three chapters covering the nosology, psychopathology, aetiology and management of manic-depressive disease, the neurotic depressions and anxiety states. The coverage is exhaustive with little unnecessary overlap between essays, and, in general, these are well-written, enjoyable and well-referenced. The American contributions suffer a little from the usual heavy circumlocutions but the authors or Editor have, on this occasion, exercised some restraint. Inevitably, perhaps, there is some unevenness in approach. Some contributions, such as the chapter on lithium are surprisingly brief whilst others, for example the chapter on personality and affective disorder, pursue the fine detail of their assignment. Some topics (drug treatment, amine hypothesis) have received extensive and repeated review in recent years and will be very familiar to many readers. Others (group psychotherapy for depression, depression in childhood, animal models) figure less frequently in the diet of general psychiatrists and physicians and will therefore be of more interest. In general, the literature is surveyed fairly but there are some surprising omissions: for example, the chapter on suicide does not refer to Stengel.

The book is attractively produced and has a clear system of headings and a good subject index, essential in a handbook. However, the printed text is eccentrically placed on the page giving wide central and narrow peripheral margins, an unwitting concession to photocopiers. There are very few typographical or spelling errors.

This is an excellent handbook summarising the important ideas and the mass of conflicting experimental and clinical data which face anyone wishing to obtain an overview of or to begin research into disorders which form the bulk of psychiatric practice. It is highly recommended.

RN HERRINGTON

Sex Differences in Dyslexia Edited by Alice Ansara, Norman Geschwind, Albert Galaburda, Marilyn Albert and Nanette Gartrell. (Pp 196; \$15.00) Maryland: Orton Dyslexic Society, 1981.

This small volume reports the proceedings of a conference organised by the Orton Society in Boston in 1981. The aim of the conference was to inquire whether "there is something about the thought processes of the people with dyslexia"; and because there are more dyslexic boys than girls it was considered that the analysis of the differences in thought processes between the two sexes might prove useful in understanding which characteristics predispose to dyslexia. The book contains 14 papers with contributions from the fields of psychology, neurology, psychiatry, paediatrics and education. The first paper deals with the fundamental question of whether there are in fact more dyslexic boys than girls. The evidence presented strongly suggests that there are inherent characteristics in the males which causes some boys to be more prone to reading disability. The contents of the remaining papers attempt to answer three main questions. First, whether there are anatomical and physiological differences between the brains of boys and girls. Second, whether there are differences between boys and girls in the development of cognitive abilities such as verbal, spatial and motor skills. Finally, what are the characteristics of dyslexic individuals and how to deal with the problem of remediation? On this last point there was a consensus of opinion that dyslexia is not a unitary deficit but that there are various forms of reading disability and that it is necessary to approach therapy according to the nature of the reading problem. Although many questions posed in the conference remained unanswered the book will prove of value to all those interested in reading and reading disabilities.

MARIA A WYKE

Eating, Sleeping and Sexuality: Recent Advances in Basic Life Functions. Edited by Michael R Zales. (Pp 328; \$34.00) New York: Raven Press, 1981.

This volume from the American College of Psychiatrists reviews three topics presented at the 1981 Annual Scientific Meeting: anorexia and obesity; insomnia and hypersomnia, and sexual dysfunction. The book

ends with an unrelated chapter by Axelrod on the role of catecholamines and psychotropic drugs in schizophrenia. What to make of all this? Is the book of any use to the practising psychiatrist or neurologist?

It starts well with a review of hunger, appetite, satiety, anorexia and obesity. The average adult eats about a million calories a year although contemporary values are shown by the popularity of Twigg, the centre spread of Playboy, and the weight of Miss America contestants in the 1970s. There is a documented case of anorexia as early as the 13th century, that of Princess Margaret of Hungary. Turning to obesity, it is hoped that some of the surgical treatments discussed, including jaw-wiring, bilio-intestinal bypass, and the anastomosis of 12 inches of jejunum to 8 inches of ileum, will have only a short vogue. The subsequent section, on sleep, reviews the 1979 classification of sleep and arousal disorders and highlights problems of sleep apnoea and the relationship between breathing and drowsiness. This is followed by a well-referenced and clinically valuable chapter on the diagnosis of erectile impotence. The final short review of sexual behaviour ranges from St Augustine to Masters and Johnson, and is aimed at the psychiatric establishment of a country where sexual competence is highly prized and where the boy scout manuals of 1911 to 1945—which carried a dire warning of the serious consequences of masturbation—are no longer read. Altogether the book is a useful up-to-date review of three topics of considerable relevance to general medicine, as well as to psychiatry.

JD PARKES

Atlas of Pediatric Neurosurgical Operations. By J Shillito and DD Matson. (Pp 497; £121.00.) London: WB Saunders Co, 1982.

"He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches." Never was GBS's maxim better refuted than by this book. It is a beautifully produced volume which sets out, in words and drawings, the step-by-step details of all the main procedures used in paediatric neurosurgery, from venous cut-down, shaving the scalp, the use of bone wax, through to the excision of a craniopharyngioma.

The initial chapters on diagnostic procedures, preparation of the patient, the operating room and its team are followed by descriptions of basic surgical techniques