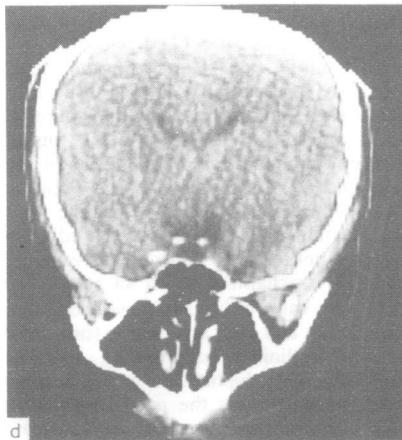


Correction

In the article "Intracranial pressure in patients with the empty sella syndrome without benign intracranial hypertension" Kaye, Tress, Brownbill, King, *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry* 1981;45:209-16 figure 10(d) was incorrect. The correct figure 10(d) is reproduced here.

**Book reviews**

Psychotropic Drugs. Plasma Concentration and Clinical Response. Edited by Graham D Burrows and Trevor R Norman. (Pp 544; SFr. 150.) New York: Marcel Dekker Inc, 1981.

Correlation of drug effect with plasma levels is of use in many disease states. One of the most difficult areas, however, is that of psychiatric illness. The variety of means of assessing or classifying mental illness, the poor understanding of underlying pathology and the changes in brain function that occur, explain why this area has not seen more widespread implementation of plasma level monitoring. The volume edited by Burrows and Norman, however, is a significant contribution to the literature on this topic. It is a comprehensive volume dealing with many aspects of drug monitoring in the psychiatric field. The initial chapter by Lang on the mechanism of action of psychotropic drugs, provides an interesting introduction to the pharmacology of these compounds. Two interesting chapters follow, on methods for the measurement of psychotropic drugs—anti-depressants, antipsychotics and anti-anxiety agents—which deal comprehensively with all modern techniques. The chapter by Graham shows application of these techniques to the measurement of the pharmacokinetics of tricyclic anti-depressants. This is followed by an excellent chapter by Burrows and Norman dealing with the relationship between plasma levels and clinical response in the anti-depressant field. The authors conclude that no consistent relationship exists between plasma levels and clinical response for tricyclic anti-depressants and that routine monitoring of plasma levels is not warranted. This contrasts with the measurement of serum lithium levels dealt with by Annitto and Gershon where only benefit is derived from determining correct therapeutic dosage and prevention in toxicity. Excellent chapters also follow on anti-psychotic agents, Curry dealing with chlorpromazine in considerable depth, Sakalus and Traficante reporting on fluphenazine, Crammer on thioridazine and Evans on butyrophenones. It must be said, however, that the overall conclusion from these in-depth appraisals is that little relationship exists between efficacy and plasma or blood antipsychotic levels. Sedvall and Grimm contribute on sampling CSF and

plasma as tools for obtaining biochemical and pharmacokinetic data in neuroleptic therapy. They suggest some relationship exists between chlorpromazine treatment and clinical effect, at least in the early phases of treatment. Fulton and others contribute extensively on the pharmacokinetic of benzodiazepines. Justifiably, diazepam is given pride of place but further sections deal with other individual benzodiazepine compounds. Sedatives and hypnotics are dealt with by Wade but again the conclusion is that plasma concentrations of hypnosedatives correlate poorly with their effects, both at dosages used clinically and in overdose. Eadie demonstrates the value of anticonvulsant drug plasma levels but concludes that the patient's clinical state should always be the final criterion in management and that plasma anticonvulsant levels should be seen only as a means to an end. The book is admirably finished by an overview by Hollister who concludes that there is little doubt that monitoring plasma levels of lithium and of anticonvulsants has made such treatment both safer and more effective. However, he is less certain of the role of tricyclic antidepressant monitoring and argues that there is little to favour monitoring of plasma concentrations of antipsychotic drugs. Hollister concludes that anti-anxiety and hypnotic drugs, which generally have a large margin of safety and suitable clinical criteria of response, should not be monitored. I find this overall to be a remarkably good book that is thoroughly recommended. I found much of interest and much new information and the editors must be congratulated for the production of such a volume. I would imagine, however, that at 150 Swiss francs many potential customers will be frightened away.

PG JENNER

Prevention and Treatment of Depression. Thomas A Ban, René Gonzalez, Assen S Jablensky, Norman A Sartorius and Felix E Vartanian. (Pp 300; £19.50.) Baltimore, University Park Press. Distributor: MTP Press Ltd. Lancaster, 1981.

This is the proceedings of a conference on depression organised by WHO and held in Washington in June 1980. Despite its title its 31 chapters embrace most aspects of depressive illness—epidemiology, classification, symptomatology, the role of biological and psychological factors in aetiology, various forms of treatment and models of care delivery from various parts of the world. The proceedings of confer-