

aging in a broad sense. The majority of the contributions represent studies of Alzheimer's disease, or senile dementia of the Alzheimer type, and several tackle this problem by considering the nature of aging itself. Many of the papers consist only of pilot studies or relatively preliminary observations and it is doubtful whether these will see the light of day as publications in more complete form elsewhere. However, there is much of interest that will stimulate other research laboratories, and indeed clinicians, in their work. The book begins with challenging reviews of the methodology and interpretation of longitudinal studies of the brain function in aging people. Patrick Rabbitt, in particular, provides a cogent discussion of the pitfalls both of methodology and interpretation of such studies. Drachman provides a critical discussion of the relation of normal aging to dementia, an area in which definitions are loose and speculation rife. Terry and Davies provide a review of recent morphological and biochemical aspects of Alzheimer's disease, a topic taken up later in the book by Bowen and colleagues among others. There are a number of papers on regional cerebral metabolism using PET scanning and many reports of studies of choline, cholinergic synaptic transmission, lecithin and choline pharmacological studies, and discussions of other neurotransmitter and neuronal aspect of brain aging, mostly in the rat. In summary, this volume is a timely addition to the literature on aging of the brain, in all its aspects.

MICHAEL SWASH

**Epilepsy and Motor System.** Edited by E-J Speckmann and CE Elger. (Pp 346; £22.50.) Munich: Urban & Schwarzenberg, 1983.

The usual argument for publication of conference proceedings is that they provide a convenient and easily accessible collection of articles on a related topic. However, it is far too common these days for contributors to symposia to use conference proceedings as an opportunity to recycle old review articles, or to present data which is not completed to a stage satisfactory for publication in a scientific journal. This is because the articles usually are not edited with sufficient rigour, and the experimental details described so scantily, that critical evaluation of the findings is impossible. In fact, of course, the most important feature of a conference is not the individual contributions, but the ability of the participants to

discuss their work both publicly, in the lecture hall, and privately, in the local bars.

This book, which contains the proceedings of a symposium held in Münster at the end of 1981, is in the usual tradition of conference publications. There are several short review chapters, some of which bear strong resemblances to other recent articles by the same authors, and a number of shorter contributions illustrating recent experimental investigations with various animal models of epilepsy, and with some human clinical data. It is a useful compilation of data mainly from scientists in Northern Europe, but without any printed discussion or comment after each chapter, the contributions lack any of the impact there may have been at the conference itself.

The papers are typed, frequently misspelt, and in some instances, grammatical minefields. At £22.50 for a small paperback book, I cannot recommend it with any honesty.

JOHN ROTHWELL

**Treatment and Management in Adult Psychiatry.** Edited by GE Berrios and JH Dowson. (Pp 502; £18.50.) London: Bailliere Tindall, 1983.

This book derives largely from the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Cambridge and has 14 authors. The design, based on "Treatment" (12 chapters) and "Management" (14 chapters) is unusual. "Treatment" refers to "Treatment Methods which are available to the Psychiatrist", while "Management" considers "The appropriate interventions for the various psychiatric syndromes". Clearly, there are opportunities and risk of overlaps. In the treatment section there is an outstanding review of the antischizophrenic drugs by Angus Mackay, and the other sections covering, broadly, psychopharmacology and psychological treatments are all competent. Only Dr Dowson, writing on group psychotherapy, allows himself the luxury of writing from his own direct experience. It makes for refreshing and controversial reading.

The chapters on management cover the common psychiatric conditions. There is considerable coverage of the "psychosomatic field". These are more uneven, perhaps because of the constraints of space. Surprisingly, considering its provenance, there is no mention of the "Management" or "Treatment" of psychiatric disorders in the puerperium.

It is also rather surprising, in a book on management, that there is little mention of the social and organisational structure of hospitals and other treatment facilities and the training and involvement of non-medical staff. Nevertheless, this is an informative and competent book, with extensive and up to date references for further reading.

JLT BIRLEY

**Depressive Disorders in Different Cultures. Report on the WHO Collaborative Study on Standardised Assessment of Depressive Disorders.** (Pp 150; Sw Fr 17.00.) Geneva: World Health Organization, 1983.

The World Health Organization is carrying out a series of studies into the epidemiology and clinical characteristics of psychiatric disorders. The International Pilot Study of Schizophrenia has been concerned in the development of standardised methods of assessing symptomatology, the application of such methods in different cultures and by psychiatrists from different backgrounds, and the study of the clinical characteristics and frequency of the disorder in widely different cultures. Such research not only gives information on the extent of mental health morbidity, but may give clues on the aetiology of disorders, for certain patterns of distribution favour some explanations cause more than others.

The present volume concerns the development of methods for the Standardized Assessment of Depressive Disorders (or SADD) in a variety of different countries, namely Switzerland, Canada, Japan and Iran. The procedure of assessing depressive syndromes was carried out in two parts; first, a screening instrument was administered which showed only 9.6% false positives; and then SADD itself was administered. Both instruments were shown to be capable of being used in different cultures and languages, and in the case of SADD, with an acceptable degree of reliability. Depressed patients from the centres showed very similar symptomatology. The authors could not satisfactorily divide the patients into "endogenous" and "psychogenic" depression and found a major overlap in symptomatology. As a consequence, they tend to favour the Continuum model in the classification of depressive disorders.

Further work is planned to follow patients and study the course outcome and response to treatment of depressive disorders in the different countries. The