very large pool of people whose lives have been made worse by injudicious back surgery. As one contributor points out, the number of patients in this group is steadily increasing as a failed back operation does not lead to a decreased life span. The situation may in some respects be worse than that produced by cancer for at least in the latter condition death removes a number of unhappy and unsatisfied patients for whom the medical profession can do nothing.

It is a pleasure to be able to recommend a book which this reviewer has found to be both informative and stimulating. All those with a special interest in the surgery of the spine will find much that is of value and interest within it.

RS MAURICE-WILLIAMS

Cerebral Vascular Disease. Butterworths International Medical Reviews Neurology 3. Edited by Michael G Harrison, Mark L Dyken. (Pp 414; £23.00.) Sevenoaks: Butterworths, 1983

In this book it is the aim of the editors to provide readers with a background against which they may have a clear view of the advances in understanding and management of cerebrovascular disease which may take place over the next few years. With the aid of workers prominent in the field the development of thought and knowledge about intra- and extra-cranial vascular disease is traced from historical times until about mid-1982. It is this that makes this book different from the seemingly ever-increasing number of publications under the general heading of strokes. It is not a series of individuals describing their particular views on aetiology or mechanisms, or the results of their particular inconclusive multicentre trial of therapy, but a series of reviews, by critical yet receptive authors, of the work that has been, and is, going on throughout the world. These reviews highlight the pitfalls many investigators may fall into, and the difficulties inherent in bringing different people, different hospitals, and different countries into one supposedly unified study. The bibliography on which the chapters are based is excellent, indeed at times awe-inspiring. Two chapters (blood-flow and cerebral metabolism, and on the pathophysiology of cerebral ischaemia) combine their references which number just under 500. In addition to these the first part of the book—"fundamental concepts"—considers the nature of atheroma, its relationship to cerebro-vascular disease,

epidemiology, and the influence of hypertension. Hypertension does at least appear to be unanimously accepted as a vital influence in strokes, which is more than can be said for most other deviations from the normal, but the question is raised whether we are too obsessed with the diastolic pressure, when marked variations in the systolic may in this context be of more immediate relevance. In the clinical section, those reviewing trials of preventative therapy all appear to be waiting the results of further trials, and it becomes abundantly clear how important it is to know the natural history of strokes and cerebrovascular disease generally. The un-natural history as one of the editors terms it, for it is almost impossible to obtain a series of cases which are not in some way influenced by therapeutic attempts, is still far from established, and even more difficult, is changing, so that "the very soil is moving" beneath the feet of the investigators, and this of course is particularly relevant to some glowing accounts that have appeared of methods of prophylaxis and treatment, particularly in the sphere of surgical reconstruction or anastomosis. The authors go to considerable lengths to avoid falling into this trap and review the very wide range of methods of investigation available, and indications for them, their limitations and possible hazards, and the action, medical or surgical, that should or should not follow the results, and these chapters should be studied very carefully. I still find myself slightly bemused by the terms invasive, and non-invasive. Are we so sure that subjecting our neurons to string magnetic fields is non-invasive? Having recently had to sign a document certifying that I was not wearing an intra-uterine contraceptive device before being admitted to the Presence of a new NMR machine, I sometimes wonder. Ischaemia however is not the only topic dealt with in detail in this book, for chapters are devoted to venous infarction, intracerebral haematoma, and subarachnoid haemorrhage. The importance of evacuation of cerebellar haematoma, and the use of stereotactic methods in deep thalamic stem haematoma, *in appropriate patients*, are emphasised, and the doubts as to the value of anti-fibrinolytic agents in the prevention of re-bleeding in subarachnoid haemorrhages are justifiably brought to the fore.

It is a very distinguished team who have co-operated to write this book, which has miraculously avoided the repetitiveness so often found in multi-authorship publications, and this must be a credit to the

editors. It is perhaps a little too detailed for the general reader, but for the neurologist, neurosurgeon, and vascular surgeon, it is compulsive, and some might think, compulsory reading.

EDWIN R BICKERSTAFF

The Affective Disorders. Edited by John M Davis and James W Mass. (Pp 443; \$27.50.) Washington: American Psychiatric Press Inc, 1983

This is the proceedings of yet another drug company sponsored conference on depression. In this case the company was Upjohn and the meeting took place in Kalamazoo, Michigan in October 1981. Doubtless the conference was enjoyable and even valuable to the participants themselves. But it is not worth reading about two years later. Those of the sixty contributors with something important to say had either published elsewhere before the conference was held or have done so by now. Anyone who happens to glance through this particular volume will learn that the mode of action of tricyclic antidepressants is still a mystery, and that the best treatment to give someone with a severe depression which has failed to respond to an adequate trial both of a tricyclic drug and of ECT is still anyone's guess. He will also be somewhat disappointed to learn that if affective disorders are genetically transmitted they should be more prevalent in monozygous than dizygous twins, and the Kallmann's old twin study is still considered "the definitive work" in the field of affective disorder. If you want accurate and up to date information about affective disorders read Paykel's Handbook instead.

R E KENDELL

Neuropsychological Assessment. Second Edition. By MD Lezak. (Pp 768; £22.50.) New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

This is a much expanded and up-dated version of the first edition which was published in 1976. The first 240 pages are devoted to what is probably the most detailed and comprehensive account currently available of the theory and practice of neuropsychological assessment. In addition to fairly standard chapters on neuroanatomy and neuropathology, there are sections dealing with the rationale of deficit measurement and the procedures and interpretation involved in neuropsychological examinations, which have a great deal to

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offer the novice and the experienced clinician alike. Difficult but important considerations, such as how to maximise the patient's level of performance, and how to report test scores are discussed in a clear and constructive fashion. Two themes that pervade this section of the book are firstly, the need for the neuropsychologist to have a good working knowledge of how the brain works and how its dysfunctions manifest themselves, and secondly, the need to adopt a flexible approach to assessment, knowing which tests to use and combining the psychometric, normative methods with a proper appreciation of qualitative, or even incidental, features of the patient's behaviour.

The latter part of the book comprises a compendium of tests and assessment techniques arranged according to type of function (intellectual, perceptual, memory etc). The coverage in these chapters is truly encyclopaedic. The tests and their scoring are described and their utility in the detection and measurement of dysfunctions is assessed. This test compendium will become an invaluable, and, for many, an indispensable source for those engaged in the clinical assessment of neuropsychological functioning.

Despite its high price this book is very good value for money, as it is in a sense two books in one. I expect that all those engaged in neuropsychological assessment can benefit from having access to it.

T TRAUER

Madness and Government. Who cares for the mentally ill? By Henry A Foley and Steven S Sharfstein. (Pp 305; \$19.95.) Washington: American Psychiatric Press Inc, 1983.

Despite its rather interesting title, this well organised book is *not* about the prevalence of mental illness in the corridors of power. The subtitle, "Who cares for the mentally ill?" is more accurate, in that it is the authors' declared intent to present "a case study of the political, social and clinical factors in public policy decisions affecting the dependent mentally ill since 1945". They confine themselves to the American experience, although deference is paid to the pioneering work of British and European psychiatrists in establishing "open-door" policies and psychopharmacological treatments.

Surprisingly, it is a much more interesting book that its subject matter would at first suggest. At its heart there is a detailed

description of the complex wheeler-dealing involved in establishing Community Mental Health Centres (CMHCs) as the basis of mental health care in the USA. This is accomplished in six solid chapters, though the authors thoughtfully provide a list of the "Key Institutional Players" to guide one through the masses of committees and individuals involved. The text is also sprinkled with arresting facts and tables. For example, 12% of men called up in 1942 for military service were exempted on neuro-psychiatric grounds, while the table describing the growth of the Mental Health Professions in America between 1956 and 1980 shows increases of over 300% in the numbers of psychologists and social workers. The writing style though is probably best described as 'American factualese', while numerous repetitions and references to peculiarly American systems can make the English reader find it rather hard work. The final third of the book is then devoted to presidential addresses, by Kennedy and by Carter, and the statute laws involved.

Overall, one might be tempted to consign this work to the worthy but dull category, given that Community Psychiatry is a topic unlikely to interest people outside the speciality. But the rewards of a little concentration are considerable. Insights into the very complexity of health care politics make one wonder at the stamina of those involved. While the central theme, of federal concern and funding, "giving a dam" as they say, versus localised and patchy provision of health care, is fascinating. For it is clear that hovering in the background is the notion of an American style NHS, something that is anathema to a large number of American physicians. In this sense "Madness and Government" is a political book, but its relevance is also clinical in that it provides a handy summary of the important factors involved in the health care business generally. Anyone concerned with the problems of maintaining a reasonable health system, whatever their special interest, could only find it useful.

TH TURNER

Companion to Psychiatric Studies 3rd Edition. Edited by RE Kendell, AK Zealley (Pp 719; £30.00) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone 1983.

This well known text book has been extensively revised for its new edition, after the comparatively short period of 5 years. The great majority of contributors are based around Edinburgh, but the editors com-

ment that the book should be regarded first and foremost as a British text book. There are thirteen chapters concerned with basic science and other aspects of psychiatry, which might be regarded as non-clinical. These include an interesting and rather idiosyncratic historical introduction and a number of excellent chapters, particularly on "The psychiatric interview", "The genetics of mental disorders", and "Measurement in psychiatry". Professor Kendell's discussion on "Diagnoses and classification" remains from the previous edition, but stands the test of time very well. He has also contributed three excellent chapters on the psychoses to the total of 27 chapters on clinical issues. Most of these are of a high order, in particular those chapters which are new to the present edition. The editors have allowed a certain freedom to the authors, which makes for refreshing reading. This extends to the number of references which vary considerably and also whether "further reading" is suggested as opposed to merely referring to points in the text. The only surprising omission considering its provenance are chapters on liaison psychiatry and on psychiatric illness in the mentally handicapped — one would hope for these in a further edition. But this remains a text book of high standard, which will be valued by students and post graduates.

JLT BIRLEY

Clinical Pharmacology of Psychotherapeutic Drugs 2nd Ed. Monographs in Clinical Pharmacology Vol 1. By Leo E Hollister (Pp 214; £22.00) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1983.

It is always a pleasure to welcome the second edition of a useful and popular book. The first edition of Hollister's text found ready acceptance for its authoritative review of the field of clinical psychopharmacology. The second edition, by some legerdemain, has been compressed from 239 to 214 pages without any substantial loss of content.

The text deals in a fairly circumscribed way with clinical psychopharmacology, although theoretical aspects such as neurotransmitters and mental illnesses are not excluded. Rather exceptionally for an American book, the content ranges more widely than the drugs available in the United States. The most notable exception is the omission of mianserin. This book will be as deservedly successful as its predecessor.

MALCOLM LADER