dyskinesia, depression, anorexia nervosa, alcoholism and the mechanism of action of benzodiazepines are all discussed.

Again we are faced with the proceedings of yet another conference which contains a series of papers, many of which are unrelated apart from the involvement of neurotransmitters and hormones. It is difficult to conceive of the individuals whose interests are sufficiently diverse to tackle such a book. This does not mean that the individual contributions to the volume are not worthy of being read. Indeed, there are a number of excellent discussions of current topics including those of Tassin and colleagues on cortical dopamine mechanisms and of Gold and colleagues on the role of peptides in psychiatric illness.

In conclusion this is not a volume that will be bought by individuals. It may find a place as a reference volume in libraries but with the current restrictions on library spending there probably will be little justification for its purchase.

PG JENNER

Anorexia Nervosa: Recent Developments in Research (Neurology & Neurobiology Volume 3) Edited by Padraig L Darby, Paul E Garfinkel, David M Garner and Donald V Coscina. (Pp 472; £73.00) New York: Alan R. Liss Inc., 1983.

This volume is largely composed of papers delivered at an international conference on anorexia nervosa, held in Toronto in 1981. To these have been added a few further contributions from other sources. There are three broad sections which deal with psychopathology, biological factors, and treatment in anorexia nervosa, and the contributors include a large number of those best known for their work in this field. The book has all the strengths and weaknesses one has come to expect from a volume compiled in this way: it is comprehensive and diverse, contributions link past work with present findings, the extensive references give easy access to the literature to those new to the field; there is, however, a good deal of repetition, there is a lack of coherence in presentation, and the relative merits of contributions are difficult to judge.

In spite of these reservations the book will be of enormous value to those working in the field, or more particularly just entering it, as it gives a bird's eye view of current work in the field in the whole of the western world. In his foreword, the Dean of the

Faculty of Medicine in the University of Toronto suggests anorexia nervosa as a model disease for the study of "Mind/Body interdependence." The wide range of contributions and the diversity of backgrounds amongst contributors certainly support this contention. The extraordinarily high price will limit purchase of the book to those deeply interested in the field and to libraries in institutions actively engaged in research on anorexia nervosa.

RHS MINDHAM

Arteriosclerotic Brain Disease Edited by Gaetano Crepaldi, Renato Fellin, Anders G Olsson and Gino Toffano. (Pp 285; \$61.00) New York: Raven Press, 1983.

This is a strange book. It has all the appearance of proceedings of a symposium as there are over 100 contributors—mostly Italian—but there is no mention of any symposium on the dust cover or title page. Moreover, the title belies its contents. The early contributions are concerned with the effect of aging on neurotransmitters, information processing and other aspects of cerebral function. Atheroma is the subject of many contributions, most of which are brief and tenuously linked one with another. In short the book is a collection of a large number of brief largely unrelated contributions which are unlikely to be of great help to an interested reader.

JOHN MARSHALL

Neurophysiology—the Essentials By George Somjen. (Pp 551; £11.00) London: Williams & Wilkins, 1983.

Thirty years ago neurophysiology was devoted to the study of individual cells in the nervous system: how nerves conduct impulses, how sensory receptors transform specific stimuli into neural code, and how muscles were made to contract. At a descriptive level we now have a good idea of how all these things work. The details are being clarified by biochemical, molecular biological and pharmacological studies. Neurophysiology is now directed towards unravelling the operation of groups of cells. The question is not so much how do single nerve cells work, but how does the brain work? At this point neurophysiology becomes both interesting to the layman and holds great promise to the neurologist.

Clinical diagnosis can be refined: anatomical loss of the dorsal columns does not give rise to "dorsal column signs" because the spino-cervical tract is spared. Abnormal muscle spindle function—which for years was the explanation for all kinds of abnormal muscle tone—has now been relegated to obscurity by the simple technique of recording single afferent units in peripheral nerves of neurological patients. Even the cerebral sensory homunculus, so beloved of neurological texts, has now been abolished. The sensory strip is now known to contain multiple representations of the body, in which adjacent body parts may not be represented in adjacent cortical cells. There is no body map as such but rather a projection of sensory dermatomes.

It is no longer possible to recommend a single physiology textbook which will serve a student through the first two years of university. Neurophysiology is an expanding science. The remarkable increase in the number of physiology textbooks which have become available in the past five years testifies to this. George Somjen's new book is not as attractively produced as some, but the quality of the material is certainly as good if not better than in other basic neurophysiology texts. At this level, a single author textbook benefits enormously from consistency of approach and a unified outlook on the subject which is usually lacking in multi-authored texts. The chapters cover the conventional material: conduction of the neurones impulses and integration of nerve signals in neural networks, to sensory and motor physiology. However, the material is consistently and clearly linked to basic neurology, which should prove invaluable in sustaining the interest of flagging medical students. Areas of current controversy are covered well, and mercifully without reference to the name, workplace and biographical background of every scientist who might have contributed to the subject. The reading lists at the end of each chapter are a little more idiosyncratic. It is an excellent idea to recommend Katz's book on Nerve, Muscle and Synapse, but is it reasonable to expect first or second year students to wade through the whole of Helmholtz's Treatise on Physiological Optics, especially when there is a far more approachable summary of Helmholtz's work in his Popular Scientific Lectures?

Minor criticisms apart, this is an excellent book, and contains far more than its small size suggests. I have already recommended it to my students.

J ROTHWELL