lesions. Three haemodynamic facts are considered, the flow velocity into major feeding arteries of the AVM, the capacity of central arteries for autoregulation and the reaction of the AVM shunt to arterial hypotension. He discusses interesting ideas on the technical aspects such as the "backward technique" of excision and the sectorisation of AVMs and the advantages of staged removals.

Sindou and Goutelle from Lyon provide a thoughtful review of posterior rhizotomy for pain; they particularly recommend this procedure when there is a well defined localised lesion both pathologically and anatomically. They caution against this procedure for non-malignant causes but will consider it for well-defined peripheral or radicular neuralgias. The various types of rhizotomy are discussed, extradural, ganglionectomy and selective intradural section.

The final chapter on the infratemporal fossa approach to lesions of the skull base by Kumar and Fisch, was of particular interest to the reviewer. Such lesions tend not to be well treated being not only rare but also somewhat out of the repertoire of neurosurgeons or otorhinolaryngologists. This authoritative chapter will be of great value to surgeons faced with these lesions.

There can be no doubt that too many books are published, many with little to recommend them. This volume and series is a clear exception to this stricture and the reviewer is delighted these eminent authorities have been asked to record their experience and knowledge for our benefit. I recommend, in stockbrokers parlance, a "buy" and more to the point, a careful read.

CBT ADAMS


This pocket sized book with its spiral binding and a plastic cover is, according to the publisher’s coverspage, a practical handbook "as vital to quality patient care as a stethoscope or blood pressure cuff". Such nonsense does not do the authors justice, and should not detract from the virtues of this well written small book. The triad of authors (unfortunately the individual contributions are not signed) maintain a consistently high standard of writing and content. The text is divided into sections on the history of epilepsy; basic physiological, biochemical and pharmacological aspects; the classification of epilepsy and EEG: epidemiology and investigation; drug treatment; and a section on special management problems. The chapters on classification and EEG are excellent, clearly and precisely written notably well chosen electroencephalographic illustrations. The section dealing with epidemiology, aetiology and investigation is equally good – here the practical experience of the authors is clearly evident, and there is a timely piece on reactions to CT contrast media for instance. The discourse on treatment and special management problems occupies over half of the text; it is very well done, and is remarkably comprehensive. Hackneyed subjects (for example the use of blood levels, the place of withdrawal of therapy) are dealt with as succinctly as more original aspects (for example, encephalographic patterns in psychiatric patients, sexual behaviour in epilepsy). There are so many excellent sections that it is difficult to single out any for special mention, but I found the sections on the individual drugs, febrile convulsions, seizures in psychiatric patients and the treatment of epilepsy in female patients particularly good. Criticisms are minor; the section on the adverse effects of anticonvulsant drugs is rather uneven and the history section, which largely follows Temkin, is not very original; inaccuracies and omissions are rare, valproate is not mentioned in the section on the section on thombocytopenia and the epinephrine stimulation test for neutropenia is stressed out of proportion to its importance, but these are quibbles. This little book is more than a pocket sized handbook, and considerably better than many larger and more pretentious volumes.

SIMON SHORRON


A series of papers given at a seminar on various aspects of the anterior pituitary gland at the Medical College in Virginia are presented in this book which is divided into five sections concerning Anatomy, Biochemistry, Neurosecretion, Physiology and Clinical aspects. Each section is introduced by a lead chapter and it is these chapters which provide a useful review of particular topics. Inevitably each section covers limited areas, some in great detail but of interest only to clinicians or scientists in a particular field. In this sense the title of the book is misleading since it is not a text book of the anterior pituitary gland. The most obvious criticism of the book is the considerable delay which has taken place since the seminars were held. Although the references are excellent, they do not extend beyond 1981. As a result there is no reference, for example, to the recent discovery of growth hormone releasing hormone in spite of the fact that contributors to the book were closely involved in this exciting work. Although there are some excellent chapters I would recommend that prospective readers borrow a copy before buying it.

NF LAWTON


This is the collection of 335 two-page abstracts for this bi-annual meeting and was published for the meeting itself. All the abstracts were marked by seven referees and the International Advisory Committee and the book provides a unique summary of what is current in the field of cerebral blood flow and metabolism both clinically and experimentally using the whole range of techniques. The great majority of the contributions have not yet appeared as formal papers. The editors are to be congratulated on the publication of this volume by the time of the meeting.

J PICKARD


Pierre Flor-Henry is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Alberta. He has already written numerous articles and edited several books on the role of hemisphere imbalance in causing psychiatric disorders. In this book he draws together all the evidence and it will undoubtedly be regarded as his magnum opus.
Flor-Henry’s ideas may be unfamiliar to some readers. His most important contribution to knowledge was a study of epileptic psychosis, published in 1969. He found that patients with left temporal lobe epilepsy tended to have a schizophrenic picture to the psychosis while those with right-sided lesions tended to have a depressive or manic illness. This paved the way for numerous studies on lateralised hemispheric dysfunction in endogenous psychosis—clinical, pathological, radiological, electrophysiological and neuropsychological. At the present time the state of knowledge can only be described as chaotic. Flor-Henry has always championed the idea that left hemisphere dysfunction underlies schizophrenia and right hemisphere dysfunction affects disorders. This is almost certainly wrong, but Flor-Henry’s importance is not his insistence on the precise form but a general appreciation that hemispheric imbalance of some sort is involved.

I would strongly recommend both neurologists and psychiatrists to buy this book, though at £3.50 it is not cheap. It is, in my view, the first genuine attempt for 100 years to close the gap between neurology and psychiatry.

It should be said that Flor-Henry is not the best advocate of his own case. He is prone to flight of ideas and overinclusion of evidence which detract from his main theme. Statements such as “One could view...... hysteria as an attenuated forme fruste of schizophrenia in the female” are unsupported. He also has a tendency to misquote others’ work to suit his argument. This is a pity because he only alienates the discerning reader.

In my view classical schizophrenia is more likely to be an effect of right hemisphere dysfunction, and a paranoid-hallucinatory psychosis caused by left temporal damage. These details are not so important at the present time as the recruitment of interest into the whole subject of hemisphere imbalance and psychosis. Flor-Henry can at least take the credit for this.

J CUTTING


Professor Fish’s monograph has long been valued by English-speaking readers for its distillation of the views of many leading German psychiatrists and philosophers. Although some of this now has more of a historical than an immediate interest, the clinical observations, and the ideas behind them, are still relevant to present day practice. In this volume, some of the material has been succinctly updated by the editor and we are still left with a considerable exposition of the phenomenology of schizophrenia and its classification, with particular reference to the writings of Kleist, Leonhard and Conrad. In addition, there is a chapter on “Theories of Causation” with an extensive discussion of existentialism and schizophrenia. Professor Hamilton, rightly regarding this chapter as “unique”, also seems to rate it as something of a museum piece, to the extent of letting it stand, leaving Jung to be discussed as though he was still alive.

While no longer a complete guide to current practice, this book continued to make its special contribution to the literature on schizophrenia.

JLT BIRLEY


Anxiolytic drugs are so widely used it is perhaps not surprising that so many books on this topic have been published in recent years. However, it is the major emphasis made in the understanding of the mechanism of action of anxiolytics, particularly benzodiazepines, that have stimulated so much interest. The initial discovery of the benzodiazepine receptor and its linkage to the GABA receptor complex provided a neuronal basis for their pharmacological effects. Latterly, the search has been on for the endogenous ligand for these receptors with numerous putative transmitters being proposed; current interest centres around the involvement of B-carbolines. The present volume attempts to present a current view of anxiolytic drug action. It is a well balanced volume which discusses in detail the classical view of benzodiazepine action via GABAergic mechanism but which gives space to the action of these drugs on other neuronal systems including dopamine. The emphasis on basic research in this area is highlighted by the nine chapters dealing with pharmacology compared to the two clinical chapters. Even here interest is mainly confined to the potential abuse of these substances. Inevitably any book dealing with a subject which is expanding as rapidly as anxiolytic research will be somewhat dated. Nevertheless, as a reference background volume the book is well worth reading. As part of a series of volumes dealing with different classes of centrally acting drugs it will provide a useful addition to libraries.

P JENNER


This book is based on the author’s MD thesis and is concerned with the value of quantifying ocular microtremor (minute oscillations of the lobe due to unconfused muscle twitch contractions) as an index of the integrity of brainstem function. The first half of the book reviews the physiology of eye movement, methods of recording microtremor and the characteristics of normal records. The latter half describes the author’s own investigations of the characteristics of microtremor during sleep, anaesthesia and in brain damage and compares the findings with other means of assessing brainstem function. At first sight the book is a model of layout with excellent illustrations and would appear to be a unique, comprehensive survey of the clinical aspects of ocular microtremor. Unfortunately there are serious omissions relating to the origin and interpretation of microtremor. Of most importance is that the author has neglected the problem that brainstem insults may selectively destroy oculomotor structures involved in the generation of microtremor, without affecting other sensorimotor functions or level of consciousness. This means that alteration in microtremor may correlate with widespread brainstem injury but not necessarily vice versa. This is possibly a serious drawback to the use of microtremor as an index of brainstem function and should have been discussed at length. Reflecting this inadequacy, the review of the physiology of brainstem oculomotor and premotor structures is at best, scanty and little attempt is made to correlate changes in microtremor with lesions of brainstem structures related to eye movements. In addition the text omits technical information which is important to the evaluation of the technique. Of note are the absence of explanation of the methods of spectral analysis used to quantify microtremor; the absence of discussion of how to deal with contamination of the recordings by spontaneous