

Book reviews

Recent Advances in Psychogeriatrics Vol 1. Edited by Tom Arie. (Pp 235; £25.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1985.

Psychogeriatrics (or whatever you care to call it) has come of age. The enormous growth in research activities in the field over the last 20 years is celebrated by Professor Arie in his introduction to this volume designated the first in a continuing series. He hopes it will "show how difficult is meticulous enquiry... and how much such enquiry may achieve".

The book consists, in the main, of a number of "state of the art" reviews but some authors present hitherto unpublished data from their own work. The subjects included do not cover the entire area; for instance, there is little mention of service development and evaluation or paranoid states, and nothing on treatment strategies for dementia. The imbalance, it is promised, will be corrected in later issue.

There are 13 chapters in all covering such topics as epidemiology and international comparative studies, affective disorders, the quality of institutional care and matters of education. The majority of papers, however, are concerned in some way with dementia; survival, genetics, clinical heterogeneity, measurement, radiological investigation and the reversibility, or otherwise, of secondary dementias.

An impressive group of authors from both sides of the Atlantic are involved, including the two "fathers" of psychogeriatrics, Felix Post and Sir Martin Roth. Several of the authors have recently contributed similar items to other published collections of reviews and some readers may feel there is unnecessary repetition here.

The book is intended for the specialist clinician or researcher and is a valuable source of references.

MICHAEL PHILPOT

Sleep and its Disorders. By JD Parkes. (Pp 482; £29.50.) Eastbourne: Holt Saunders, 1985.

In the post-war years, muscle disease from being a small section of the textbook briefly describing few poorly differentiated diseases suddenly spread to become a specialty within the specialty of neurology with a plethora of large monographs describing a wide variety of discrete disorders. And this

despite a tantalising lack of a good conceptual model for myopathic disease. Now we are experiencing the same growth of interest in sleep and the apnoeic syndromes. Review chapters are already baffling the uninitiated because it is difficult to sort out established fact from the assertion that becomes truth because it has been said three times. A monograph should make it possible for the new reader to assess critically the limitations of established knowledge. British psychiatrists and electroencephalographers made important observations on normal sleep in the 1950s and the sleep apnoea syndromes are a contemporary enthusiasm of clinical respiratory physiologists and paediatricians investigating cot deaths, but the new awareness has had little impact on the practice of neurology in this country so far as can be judged by the programmes of our professional societies. This excellent and timely monograph (No. 14 in the *Major Problems in Neurology* series) should stimulate wider interest in an important area of clinical disorder.

The book is in three sections (1) normal sleep, (2) sleep disorders, (3) pharmacology and sleep. These cover all the important aspects, supported by a very extensive bibliography. Indeed the extensive literature citation is the root of its main weakness. It is possible to find completely contradictory statements quoted from papers without any clear indication which view Dr Parkes supports. This is especially evident in what should be the core of the book, the anatomical and physiological basis of the sleep-wake cycle (chapter 2) and sleep neurochemistry (chapter 8). Thirty-five years after Magoun, Moruzzi and Jouvet we should have a reasonable conceptual model of sleep, coma, consciousness and awareness on which to stick experimental data and to speculate about disease. If we cannot do so it is not necessarily because observational data are wrong or important facts missing. It could be that the model is insufficient or too orientated to the reticular formation.

It is implicit in all reviews that sleep is an entity with cycling through "depths" and that human sleep is essentially the same as cat sleep, so that REM sleep in man must be "paradoxical" despite the common observation that, although it is a deep sleep stage in some species, it is an emergent, pre-arousal, stage in man. The author draws attention to the very wide differences of the sleep behaviour patterns even within the mammals. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine his own conceptual model. Is the ponto-mesencephalic noradrenergic projection inhibitory or facilitatory with regard

to arousal? Is it, in fact, a "system" and is this a meaningful question? The actions of serotonin and its precursors are correctly described as "conflicting". The anatomical section does not help to resolve the problem. A reprinted section of the upper brainstem (species not identified) in the sagittal plain (sic) is not analysed functionally and the only other anatomical diagram shows the raphe nuclei lateral to the locus coeruleus and far from the midline structure for which they are named.

I do not feel that I understand sleep and wakefulness any better after a close study of these chapters, but in doing so Dr Parkes has led me through a large literature for which I am grateful. His book will stimulate a new enthusiasm for the study of the most important function of the nervous system and will provide an excellent reference work on the disorders of sleep.

JA SIMPSON

Treatment of Aphasia. A Language-Oriented Approach. By Cynthia M Shewan and Donna L Pandur. (Pp 328; £22.50.) Basingstoke: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 1986.

The value of treating aphasic patients remains controversial and, as the preface to this book declares, there is a "relative lack of research based information about aphasia treatment". This book, though eminently practical and useful, does little to remedy this deficiency.

The hypothesis underlying the approach of the authors is that aphasia involves disturbance of the language system itself and not merely access to it. To study this they have examined five modalities, auditory and visual processes, oral and graphic expression and gestural communication. The book sets out precisely how these modalities should be assessed, the test material being presented in detail.

Where it falls down is in the assessment of the value of this approach. Twenty seven treated subjects, of whom six were lost to follow-up, are compared with 22 controls but as most of the canons for controlled trials were offended little reliance can be placed on the conclusion which, needless to say, was that treatment helps.

Despite this the book will be of interest to those concerned with aphasia and certainly provide a methodology which is worth testing in a more rigorous fashion.

J MARSHALL