

Book reviews

The advice given that "care is necessary" contrasts with his detailed descriptions elsewhere of exactly how to take care. The use of adjuncts to operation such as ultrasonic aspiration and the laser receives little mention, but this is not an important gap.

Professor Sugita points out that it is more easy to solve problems outside the operating theatre than when faced with a difficulty inside. His book will undoubtedly help others to approach difficult or unexpected problems with a greater range of options. It will be enjoyed by all neurosurgeons; I believe that almost all will want also to have it readily available to refer to in moments of need.

GRAHAM TEASDALE

brand name, proprietary brand name, and forms available, i.e. tablets, elixir, injections, etc. are given. The structure of each drug is pictorially represented, pharmacokinetics are considered and dosage recommendations are stated; one is also given a clear account of the mode of action, side effects, contra-indications, precautions, drug interactions, dependence potential and overdose implications for each drug, with additional information where relevant.

This concise, readable, easy to carry, reasonably priced book is much needed and is highly recommended to both libraries and to individuals.

MARY ROBERTSON

Psychological Medicine. An Introduction to Psychiatry. 10th ed. By Peter Storey (Pp 484; £12.95.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

The first edition of this book appeared in 1943 and there have since been nine further versions making it one of the oldest established text-books of psychiatry for undergraduates. The fourth edition was used by the reviewer as a student; a good deal of the style and layout have been retained, but with considerable revision.

The book presents an eminently sensible, wide-ranging and useful view of psychiatry for the undergraduate. The descriptive approach is adopted throughout but with reference to other approaches and influences. The text is helped by detailed accounts of the clinical features of psychiatric disorders, including examples of the changes observed in the mental states of psychiatrically disordered subjects. There is a summary at the end of each chapter which undergraduates will find helpful in revision.

There are some weaknesses in the book which might be dealt with in a subsequent edition; the account of psychiatric classification is a personal one and reference to the International Classification of Diseases might be more appropriate and helpful to the student in becoming familiar with attempts at classifying disorders on an international scale; the classification of dementias is old fashioned and should be revised; the management of dementing illness is almost restricted to diagnosis and should be expanded to include general management, social and legal matters; the use of the electroencephalogram in diagnosis has probably been largely superseded by computed tomography; the description of psychiatric

emergencies is inadequate and omits important topics such as problems arising from drug abuse. Child and adolescent psychiatry is not covered and this represents a major deficiency in the book, as students may have to purchase an additional book to cover this field.

Re-reading this book was like meeting an old friend, clearly recognisable, somewhat overweight, but with much new experience to report. The book remains in the mainstream of psychiatry and is sound in all respects although it might have given more emphasis to psychiatric practice outside the hospital. The very age of the book recommends it, in that it gives a clear view of the evolution of psychiatry in the last thirty years. The book can be confidently recommended to medical students; it will serve them well as it did the reviewer.

RHS MINDHAM

Guide to the Use of Psychotropic Drugs. By Donald Gillies and Malcolm Lader. (Pp 532; £14.95.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

This superb book comprises three sections. In the first, the authors concisely describe the major symptoms found in various psychiatric conditions including organic states, epilepsy, schizophrenia, affective disorders, neuroses, psychosomatic eating and sexual disorders, alcoholism and drug dependence. In this reviewer's opinion, the aim of this section is both to acquaint the reader with the disorders, emphasising the particular relevance of the conditions to the use of psychotropic drugs, and further to state the authors' views on the subject. The authors have struck a nice balance between giving sufficient information for those not familiar with the topic whilst acknowledging that for trained people this does not pretend to be a text book on psychiatry.

In the second section, the general properties of each class of psychotropic drug, namely the antidepressive, anxiolytic, hypnotic agents and lithium are outlined, together with their chemical actions, usage and side effects. As the authors point out, the area is a large one, and they have taken care to "try and give a consensus view of the more controversial topics". In addition, both similarities and differences between the drug classes are highlighted.

The meat of the book is the third section, which comprises 471 pages of solid, easily accessible information on the properties of the individual psychotropic agents. The drugs are listed in alphabetical order, and for each one a wealth of information is supplied. The indications, the chemical group,

Spina Bifida and Neural Tube Defects. Edited by D Voth and P Gleys in collaboration with J Lorber. (Pp 320; DM148.00.) Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986.

The subtitle of this book promises much—"Basic research, interdisciplinary diagnostics, results and prognosis". It is not, as might therefore be expected, a text book. Once more we have a record of a meeting, this time of a "workshop". If it really was a workshop, then its value would have been in the discussions and informal coming together of workers in different disciplines, not in the essays offered here.

The introductory review by Lorber of the changing incidence of spina bifida in different parts of the world is helpful and mildly provocative. Sections on experimental neural tube defects, on early brain morphogenesis, on primary prevention of spina bifida cystica, on selective treatment and on other aspects in this collection of 39 essays are also of value either as reviews or reports of original work. Fortunately the breathtaking brevity of "Diagnosis and treatment of the tethered spinal cord syndrome" in 23 lines is not typical of the contributions. Nor is the irrelevance of a contribution on arachnoid cysts of the Sylvian fissure or that on coloboma.

This is a book for the departmental library; but I wish publishers would overcome their shyness about announcing on the title page that they are offering a report of proceedings.

KENNETH TILL