

whole. It is not easy within the complexities of modern neurochemistry to present data in a form which is understandable to those requiring an introduction to this area. This is certainly a book I shall recommend to my postgraduate students and to clinical colleagues.

P JENNER

**Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders.** *British Medical Bulletin Vol 42 Number 1.* Edited by M Roth and LL Iversen (Pp 116; £16.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

The British Medical Bulletin has a well-deserved reputation for publishing high quality, authoritative and up to date reviews on topical and controversial subjects. In this singular collection of essays it does not fall short of this standard. Sir Martin Roth introduces this issue by reminding us of the increase in the ageing populus and the attendant increase in demented patients. This is already both a medical and a social problem, and one which in my estimation will require both recognition and the formulation of definite policies by national governments of whatever colour.

This volume is mainly devoted to recent developments. The contents survey epidemiology, clinical and neuropsychological assessment, genetics, brain imaging, neurophysiology and pathology. More specialised chapters cover the cholinergic disorder (E Perry), transmissibility (Corsellis) and non-cholinergic pharmacological treatments (Kopelman and Lishman).

It is now clear that the Alzheimer brain is abnormal in respect of many neurotransmitters and that the serviceable cholinergic hypothesis, though it sheds light on the amnesic defect, fails to explain any fundamental processes in causation. The similarities with Parkinson's disease (Quinn, Rossor and Marsden) and the claimed overlap of these two very common illnesses of late life is expounded. And yet the therapeutic response of Parkinson's disease has not been mirrored by the successful rational use of cholinergic agonists in dementia (Hollander *et al.*) It is a sign of our current ignorance of both cause and remedy that the vital issues of management (in the general sense of looking after afflicted patients and appraising resources, advocacy and education) need a good review, albeit with a strong sociological bias (T Arie).

This issue of the BMB contains a mass of data and sources, valuable both for the basic scientist and clinician. Opinions are

ventured by the braver and perhaps the more mature contributors, lending a more personal and stimulating aspect to their chapters. All the major problem areas are identified and explored, so that if the going is tough in places, the reader's efforts are likely to be rewarded. I much prefer this compilation of data and references to the multitude of more ephemeral published symposia available.

JMS PEARCE

**A Method of Psychiatry. 2nd edition.** Edited by Stanley E Greben, Vivian M Rakoff, George Voineskos. (Pp 474; \$32.75.) Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger. UK Distrib: Quest-Moridien Ltd, 1985.

This is the second edition of the undergraduate textbook of psychiatry prepared by faculty members of the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Toronto. It is designed to reflect their particular methods of teaching which are broadly based, and regard the psychiatrist as physician and healer. The second edition aims to expand on the first, following the changes in knowledge and emphasis in the speciality with particular reference to old age, newer ideas about schizophrenia, psychosomatic mechanisms and the relationships between psychiatry and other medical specialities. It is a difficult book to review in that it must presumably complement a teaching course to which the reader does not have access and which is clearly more detailed and academic than undergraduate courses in this country.

The book is divided into a number of sections, the later, clinical ones being mainly of quite a high standard, and at a level more appropriate to postgraduate students. The content includes a wide range of approaches to all the main groups of disorders and some helpful references. The "how to do it" chapters assume that a psychotherapeutic relationship is the ultimate aim, but the chapters on history-taking and examinations have some good points.

However, the early chapters are very disappointing, containing discussions in great and confusing depth on some subjects (such as infancy and childhood) whilst ignoring totally the difficulties of early adult life and allowing only two and a half sides to a very "middle class" account of old age. There are at least four chapters dealing with aspects of psychosomatic relationships, whose definitions range from the non-existent to the multiple and conflicting and would require considerable sophistication to

make sense of. It is hard to see the first two sections as a useful introduction to the rest of the volume and for our use it might be better to suggest using the contents almost in reverse order.

In summary this book might be of some use to postgraduates, but would not be helpful to most undergraduates. It would not be a book to invest in, if funds were limited.

ISOBEL CARD

**Neurohistochemistry: Modern Methods and Applications. Neurology and Neurobiology Vol 16.** Edited by Pertti Panula, Heikki Paivarinta, Seppo Soinil. (Pp 710; £39.00.) New York: Alan R Liss Inc, 1986.

This is largely a collection of review articles, devoted to recent applications of immunohistochemistry to the study of neurotransmission; it is dedicated to the pioneer Scandinavian neuro-histochemist, Olavi Eranko.

The three parts are devoted to techniques, developmental studies and neurotransmitter systems. In the first, interesting discussions on the use of recombinant-DNA technology in the identification of neurotransmitter, prohormones and on the use of image analysis in studies of the hypothalamic nuclei are included. The middle part concentrates on neuronal development with three contributions devoted to the SIF cell of sympathetic ganglia. The effects of host thyroid depletion on developing rat parietal cortex are explored and there is a wide ranging, well-illustrated summary of peptidergic neuron ontogeny. In the final part, an historical chapter by Hokfelt contains a notable section on neuropeptide coexistence within neurons (also discussed in a later article), and there are interesting contributions on benzodiazepine receptors in rat and human brain and the synaptic connections of immunolabelled catecholaminergic neurons studied ultrastructurally.

FR WELLS

**The Pathology of the Myelinated Axon. (Current Trends in Neurosciences Series.)** Edited by M Adachi, A Hirano, SM Aronson. (Pp 406; £105.75.) Tokyo: Igaku-Shoin. UK Distrib: Stonebridge Distribution Ltd, 1985.

It is not stated either by the publishers or the editors whether this beautifully produced