

a good chapter on the present status of evoked potentials in aging and dementia. This section is weak on somatosensory evoked potentials, and spinal evoked potentials. If these had been included instead of some of the more repetitious chapters relating to visual evoked responses, this would have made a formidable section.

Section 2 deals with slow wave phenomena and gives a rather poor and idiosyncratic view of present day slow wave research. Although one chapter summarises the present position as regards the CNV and psychiatric states, with a further chapter on brain DC potentials, the section does not deal with the very large literature and theory underlying P300 or other CNV work. This is a serious omission, which weakens the section.

Section 3 takes a broad overview of some aspects of the cutting edge of EEG analysis. As this is such a wide field, it is a question of editorial choice, and the selection that the editors have made is relevant to the rest of the book. For example, there is a good chapter on the validity of EEG and alpha symmetry by Butler and Glass, and a good review chapter of quantitative EEG methods in human neuropsychopharmacology.

Section 4 deals with autonomic and skeleto-motor activity. This is an area which is usually sadly neglected in textbooks of psychophysiology. The section is opened by Levy, Martin and co-workers, in an excellent chapter on their theory of differential conditioning as a basis for psychophysiological disorders. The section proceeds through a description of the use of the polygraph as a lie detector, and a section by Randy Katz on understanding how the predictability of a stimulus affects the stress that is produced. There is then a comprehensive coverage of GSR, EMG, and the electrocardiogram in psychophysiological research.

The final section, on interdisciplinary study, is a lucky dip by the editors into the current tub of the more exciting aspects of psychophysiological research. All choice must be idiosyncratic, and their choices certainly reflect this. There is a good article by Wastell on the basic assumptions underlying the event related potential, which takes us to task for the naive view that most of us have shared to date. There is also a good description of contemporary models of human information processing, using the techniques of psychophysiology. I was pleased to see that magnetoencephalography is at long last given some mention, although this article is only an introductory one and already outdated. The mandatory article by

Gruzelier and co-workers on hemisphere asymmetries in schizophrenia is of course also included.

Who should buy this book? Clearly, it should be on every library shelf, as a current statement of the present state of neuropsychophysiology. Those who have access to departmental grants would be well advised to buy a copy for their own departmental bookshelves. Certainly it should be available to those of us who are involved in teaching, and I would even agree with the editors when they suggest that it might be given to final year undergraduate students (though I feel only the brightest ones are likely to get much out of it). As an enthusiastic brain researcher, should you put your hand into your own pocket and come out with 45 shiny one pound coins? I suspect not, provided a copy is available in your departmental library, so that you can read (or copy) the chapters most of interest to you.

I must confess to a personal prejudice against books which look as though they have been run off on a rather old and inefficient typewriter. Surely a book of this quality (and at this price) deserves to be properly printed?

P FENWICK

Practical Psychiatry of Old Age. By John Wattis and Michael Church. (Pp 195; £19.95 h/bk; £8.95 p/bk.) London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1986.

The authors declare their objectives in their introduction. The book is to be a "practical approach", "in non technical language", "accessible to a wide range of health and social care workers . . . and their trainees", "using a problem solving approach" and dealing with different patients as "whole people interacting to their environment".

Few would dispute their objectives, but have they achieved their aim? Their book falls into various sections; basic background information and skills, dealing with symptoms and discussing the problems of care and management.

The background information consists of a useful review of the demographic and epidemiological aspects of the problems faced in caring for an ageing population, an enumeration of the types of service that have developed, but this is followed by an unhelpful flow chart concerning patterns of service delivery and an accompanying description which gives an impression that

what occurs in the service in which the authors work is a sort of "Categorical Imperative". A simple clearly written account of the most commonly agreed diagnostic categories would have been most helpful; the flow chart adds little and makes simplistic assumptions some of which are open to argument. It also seems somewhat unusual to give a schema for assessment before clarifying the issues of diagnosis. Confusion is added to the confusional states which seem to be on a continuum with the dementias on one hand and yet we are exhorted to distinguish them carefully but not given a great deal of help in this task. The spurious impression of clarity, given by the flow charts is shown again by that referring to the persecutory states, in which it is suggested if the patient is undergoing "real" persecution then they cannot have paraphrenia; would that it were as easy as that.

The question of how easily people untrained in psychology and psychiatry will understand the text is problematical when in case studies we are expected to understand the meaning of "hostile dependent behaviour" and the technical language in other sections is also complex. Perhaps the problem orientated analyses of clinical cases give the best flavour of what the authors intended to achieve, conveying aspects of practical and commonsense interventions.

Has the book achieved its aims? Only in part: it is aimed like a blunderbus at a wide field for many disciplines, but the explanations of disease processes and the use of flow charts are simplistic rather than simple, though the glimpses it gives of clinical practice are more encouraging and helpful.

K BERGMANN

Working Memory. (*Oxford Psychology Series No. 11.*) By Alan Baddeley. (Pp 289; £30.00.) Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

Psychologists have commonly distinguished between short lasting memory representations and more durable, longer term forms of storage. The short term temporary memory representations are held to be strictly limited in terms of the amount of information which can be stored at any one time, as well as being transient. In many contemporary information processing models of skills such as language comprehension and problem solving, temporary forms of storage, termed Working Memory, play a central role. Despite the popularity of this

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construct, there is comparatively little agreement with regard to the structure of the working memory system, or the types, and levels of representation that are involved (see Monsell¹ for discussion).

Commencing with the account presented in Baddeley and Hitch,² the author and his co-workers have developed a particular model of Working Memory, and this monograph presents an overview of research and theory within that specific framework. Alan Baddeley's own developments of this model are persuasively described, but almost no consideration is given to alternative theories. Working Memory is a state of the art account of particular, albeit influential, set of constructs. It makes no pretensions to being a critical or tutorial survey of the current literature on short term storage systems, representations and processes.

In addition to evidence from studies of normal subjects, Baddeley discusses some of the relevant neuropsychological literature. Thus patients with a selective impairment of auditory verbal span are considered as evidence for failure of one of the components of system. Similarly certain types of frontal lobe syndrome are identified with dysfunction of another component. In the latter chapters of this book Alan Baddeley discusses the relevance of Working Memory for a range of topics including fluent reading, the development of memory span, aging and dementia.

Working Memory provides an introduction to the framework which has been developed by the author which would make a good introductory source for psychologists. It is insufficiently general in scope to appeal to a non-specialist audience.

References

- 1 Monsell S. Components of Working Memory underlying verbal skills: A "Distributed Capacities" view. In: Bouma H, Bouwhuis D, eds. *Attention and Performance X*. Hillsdale N.J., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1984.
- 2 Baddeley A, Hitch G. Working Memory. In: Bower G, ed. *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*. Vol 8. New York: Academic Press, 1974.

RA MCCARTHY

Viral Encephalitis: Pathology, Diagnosis and Management. By John Booss and Margaret M Esiri. (Pp 365; £39.50.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1986.

The authors emphasise in their Preface that

this book has been written for clinicians. Although they suggest that the readership might consist of general practitioners as well as specialists, it is clear from the general level and approach of the book that it is really intended for neurologists and neurosurgeons, and also for pathologists with an interest in neuropathology. Throughout the book a commendable attempt is made to explain the clinical features of viral encephalitis in relation to causative organisms and pathological processes. The authors realise that it is unusual for the clinician to recognise the precise viral cause of illness in any individual patient but the emphasis of the book is on illustrating the particular features of certain characteristic infections. Clearly, in clinical practice the majority of patients with viral encephalitis are never diagnosed in the specific terms, that is, the precise causative virus is never discovered. At the present time it is arguable that if this information were to be available as a result of some yet to be invented rapid diagnostic test, management would be altered in any way and it has to be said that there appears to be little clinical role for the speciality of virology in this context. Despite this, if there is to be any improvement in the pragmatic forms of management currently used in the treatment of viral meningitis then information of this type will need to be made available since this should lead to a better characterisation of individual viral syndromes, at present lost within the overall clinical features. In this book the syndromes of viral infection of the nervous system are treated as sporadic, epidemic, parainfectious, brain stem, or sub-acute and chronic. The special situations of encephalitis and immunocompromised patients, including AIDS and in Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease receive chapters of their own. The book begins with conventional accounts of the pathological and clinical features with advice on management before launching into detailed accounts of the various forms of encephalitis under the headings enumerated above. This is a successful approach although it has to be said that the sub-division of sporadic and epidemic encephalitis seems to this reviewer to be arbitrary in the context of the clinician confronted with a patient with encephalitis late on a Sunday night when all the virologists are safely in bed! The book is to be commended in the detailed approach taken in the descriptions of the different types of viral infection. It is thoroughly well referenced and sound advice is given on basic matters such as the management of animal bites in relation to rabies exposure and in the appropriate methods of safeguarding sub-

jects at risk of preventable infections of this type. The question of brain biopsy is discussed in a full and honest way and there is a full account of the complications of common infections such as varicella. The role of electrophysiological diagnosis and of CSF examination receives adequate attention in relation to individual diseases, and, in the general sense in the introductory chapters on clinical management and diagnosis. The precautions to be taken in managing patients with Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease and, in particular, the methods of sterilisation of instruments coming into contact with body fluids of such patients, and of patients with AIDS, are properly described. The book is marred to some extent by the rather poor index and those seeking advice on the management of encephalitis in children will find that the special problems posed by this syndrome are discussed not in one place, but scattered throughout the book in relation to the various viral causes. There is no overall discussion of the childhood encephalopathies believed to be viral that lead to so much disability, despite the fact that they have received attention in a nationwide study during recent years. There have been other publications in monograph form concerned with the general problem of viral encephalitis and the present book compares well with these, although it is perhaps somewhat lacking in discussion of the basic science aspects of the processes of viral invasion of cells, and especially of the nervous system, and the mechanisms of the acquisition of immunity.

M SWASH

Benzodiazepine/GABA Receptors and Chloride Channels: Structural and Functional Properties. Receptor Biochemistry and Methodology Vol 5. Edited by Richard W Olsen and J Craig Venter. (Pp 366; £42.50.) New York: Alan R Liss Inc, 1986.

Investigations of GABA receptors and the actions of benzodiazepine drugs has provided a model by which other receptor systems should be investigated. The importance of drug action alone at these receptor sites in the treatment of seizures and anxiety might have warranted the intensity of study GABA and benzodiazepine receptors have received. However, the advances made are also a tribute to the consistent efforts of a small number of individual scientists over the past decade. The present volume charts progress in our understanding of the