combination of head and spinal injury, contains two chapters that address the interesting finding that a considerable proportion of spinal cord injury patients show cognitive and other neuropsychological impairments upon formal testing. This was observed in 43% of 130 patients in one series and 57% of a series of 30 patients. In both cases the authors have ascribed this neuropsychological deficit to occult head injury occurring at the time of the spinal cord injury without considering that patients with acute spinal cord injury may become hypoxic and hypotensive and that these insults may be responsible for subsequent brain dysfunction. Nevertheless, the findings would be of interest to those responsible for planning spinal rehabilitation programmes. The final section, devoted to late sequelae of head injury, addresses issues related to behaviour modification therapy, sexual difficulties after traumatic brain injury, the design of rehabilitation strategies based on understanding the pathology of traumatic brain injury, problems of stress and burn-out in rehabilitation staff and ethical considerations in instituting aggressive therapy and deciding when to terminate it.

Because of its diversity this small book has something in it of interest to the broad spectrum of people who treat patients with head and spinal cord injury, both in the early and late phases. Much of the material has been published elsewhere, but one would have to review a very large number of journals to find it. For departments that have a major interest in head and spinal injury this book is well worth having in the departmental library.

J DOUGLAS MILLER

Rehabilitation of the Physically Disabled Adult. Edited by C John Goodwill, H Anne Chamberlain. (Pp 881; H/b £55·00; P/b £24·50.) London: Chapman and Hall, 1988.

The editors have assembled a formidable array of British contributors to this unique book, which is concerned with all conceivable aspects of physical disability. It is arranged in eight sections that include sensory and communication disorders, and neurological as well as musculo-skeletal disorders, disability equipment and delivery of services. Incontinence, psychological and sexual problems, skin and dental care are all covered, as well as wider issues such as housing and social services, education and employment.

It is a sad reflection on British neurology that only four of the chapters on neurological disorders are written by neurologists; most of the others are by experienced rheumatologists who have admirably filled the gap. There are very few omissions, although the rehabilitation of peripheral nerve injuries and post-operative neurosurgical cases might have deserved specific consideration. The management of hysterical conversation syndromes is, perhaps wisely, avoided.

Many different health care professions will find much useful information by reading this volume and gain invaluable insights into the practice of others. Neurologists and neurosurgeons will learn all they need to know, but were never taught, about such diverse topics as wheelchairs and seating, orthotics, environmental and communication aids. The only conceivable rivals to this book are a couple of recent American tomes that are more detailed and expensive.

I personally learnt much from this well-produced and reasonably priced work. It is easy to dip into, since each chapter is relatively brief yet comprehensive and self-contained. It is warmly recommended, particularly to busy neurologists or surgeons who wish to broaden their outlook and improve their management of the disabling consequences of neurological disease.

RICHARD HARDIE

Use of Anticonvulsants in Psychiatry: Recent Advances. Edited by Susan McElroy, Harrison Pope. (Pp 180; $22.50.) New Jersey: Oxford Health Card Inc, 1988.

Anticonvulsants may not be everybody's first choice of psychotropic drug. Indeed, although many of us would be prepared to admit that carbamazepine could have a place in the psychotropic therapeutic field, few of us would acknowledge that either valproate or phenytoin could be useful. It will therefore come as a surprise to learn that phenytoin was used in the late 1940s and early 1950s as both an antipsychotic and antidepressant drug, interest in it dwindling with the advent of the superior phenothiazines in 1952. Valproate (a more recent drug), has also, surprisingly, been tried in several studies as a treatment for depression.

The Use of Anticonvulsants in Psychiatry, Recent Advances is an excellent overall introduction to the use of anticonvulsants in psychiatry. It is a multiauthored book which reviews the history, pharmacology, and clinical applications of all the major anticonvulsants, together with some of the minor ones. The standard of editing is high, so that stylistic differences between chapters and authors are kept to a minimum. Multi-authored books frequently suffer from unevenness of presentation of material in different chapters. The editors have demanded, and got, a high standard of material from each of their authors, which makes the book more readable, and better value, than it would otherwise be.

As a front running psychotropic drug carbamazepine is clearly the anticonvulsant of choice. It is being used widely in mania and depression, with considerable success and the chapter by Post details fully all the major studies to date. His conclusions, that "the drug appears capable of exerting rapid onset of robust anti-manic effects in more than 50% of patients, and a more delayed onset of antidepressant effects in a smaller percentage of depressed patients", must make it an important addition to the clinician's armoury.

Phenytoin, ethosuximide, and clonazepam have all been used in the treatment of both psychotic and depressive illnesses. It depends on the study as to whether or not you believe that they are effective. The review chapters offer evidence both ways. What is, however, clear is that some studies do report quite marked psychotropic effects, and thus a more detailed knowledge of these drugs and their psychopharmacology should be obtained by all of us who treat patients with epilepsy. Sodium valproate also has some antidepressant effect, probably mediated via the gabbaergic control of the noradrenergic neurons involved in mood control. It has also been used in eating disorders, and in rats has a significant effect on the circadian sleep-wake cycle. Clearly, it is more than a simple anticonvulsant.

This book is a necessity for any physician involved in the treatment of patients with epilepsy, as a thorough reading of the review chapters brings one up to date with the very wide spectrum of psychotropic effects that can be expected from routine anticonvulsant medication. Psychiatrists will also benefit from a copy on their shelves, as some of these drugs should be considered in resistant affective illnesses and in disorders of behaviour. A useful book for the practising physician.

PETER FENWICK

Diagnostic Tests in Neurology. By G D Perkin. (Pp 321; £19.95.) London: Chapman and Hall Medical, 1988.

This is one of a new series of books intended both for trainees and established clinicians as

a practical guide to the investigation of patients. The stated aim of the series is to describe the development, methods and interpretation of clinical tests in various specialities, together with an evaluation of their accuracy, safety and clinical usefulness.

The opening chapter of *Diagnostic Tests in Neurology* covers radiology, neurophysiology, lumbar puncture and PET scanning in a concise twenty pages where the basic techniques and indications are critically reviewed. Readers are not spared the cost effectiveness of some of the more widely used tests, in particular the skull radiograph. Chapter 2 launches into non-specific symptoms like headache, dizziness and syncope and gives a clearly argued recommendation on their investigation indicating that in many instances all that is required is a good history and clinical examination. This section alone is to be highly commended to general practitioners or anyone else considering referring a dizzy or headachey patient to a neurologist. The author then successively discusses the value of various tests in the different areas of clinical practice including AIDS and neurological emergencies, each chapter being followed by a vast list of carefully chosen references.

All the old chestnuts are covered—when should you do an EEG? when shouldn't you do a lumbar puncture? and what do you achieve by radiography of the cervical spine? The flow diagrams for assessment of various problems are particularly good and could be developed further to include cerebellar disorders, spinal cord syndromes and neuropathy—this would be for future editions.

There must always be a few minor niggles in a book at the lower end of the price market and the greatest of these is that the reproduction of radiological material is largely poor although it could have been helped by the judicious use of arrows—I am still puzzling over the PET scans and the Duplex scan of the internal carotid artery on page 59 is meaningless to anyone unversed in that particular art-form. Some of the discussion on radiology is arguably already outdated, such as myodil and metrizamide are now ancient history in neuroradiological departments in the UK (or should be!). The description of the principles of MRI scanning is so pithy that it borders incomprehensibility and a diagram may have helped. These however are minor criticisms and overall I can only admire the author's ability to provide a refreshing and unbiased account of the state of the art in neurological investigations. To condense this into three hundred and twenty two pages which include sixty six pages of references is a remarkable achievement. Everyone involved in clinical neurological practice should have a copy of this book and it will probably end up too on the shelves of most audit conscious Unit Managers. In summary it is a little masterpiece.

D JEFFERSON

Receptors and Ligands in Psychiatry. *Intercellular and Intracellular Communication series Vol 3.* Edited by A K Sen, Tyrone Lee. (Pp 578; £75·00.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

The search for an organic cause for psychiatric disorders has so far yielded little. Many hypotheses of such diseases have been suggested but none proven. Few concepts have stood the test of time. The ability of specific drug classes to control the symptoms of psychiatric illness has led to theories which may have absolutely nothing to do with the underlying fault. More recently, the use of receptor binding techniques also has suggested alterations in neuronal receptor function which may be related to the disease process. However, these probably tell us more about the way in which neurotransmitter receptors adapt to disorganised neuronal activity, be it caused directly or indirectly by the disease or its drug treatment.

The volume title leads the reader to expect contributions centred on neurotransmitter receptors and the use of the ligands which identify them in a variety of psychiatric disorders. This is not the case; instead the reader is faced with 25 diverse views on the cause, treatment and detection of schizophrenia, depression and anxiety. Apart from a few chapters at the end of the volume dealing with basic problems of receptor research (for example specificity of ligands, isolation and purification of neurotransmitter receptors) most chapters form a strange mixture of highly personalised views on the relationship of a variety of neurotransmitter systems to mental illness. Many of the chapters are individually concise and well-balanced reviews of specific areas. For example, there are comprehensive introductions to experimental and clinical studies in new psychopharmacological research areas such as the antipsychotic potential of dopamine autoreceptor agonists and antagonists or the relation of acetylcholine and 5-HT to schizophrenia. Others, however, are simple collections of data. The major problem is that overall, the chapters make strange bedfellows and do not deal with the issues the book title suggests.

The specialist research worker may find this volume of limited value but it does give an overview of the neurochemical and psychopharmacological basis of current research in biological psychiatry together with an indication of its lack of cohesiveness at this time.

P JENNER

Carotid Artery Plaques: Pathogenesis, Development, Evaluation, Treatment. Edited by M Hennerici, G Sitzer, H-D Weger. (Pp 282; £36.41.) Basel: Karger, 1988.

This book consists of the papers presented at a workshop in West Germany in January 1987, and it suffers from many of the faults such books are prone to. It is two years out of date by the time it is printed. In the hurry to get into print, the editorial supervision of each contribution has been rather rushed and there are many mistakes, some of which are quite serious (two pages transposed, several figures misnumbered), some of which are irritating (different citation styles in different chapters) and some merely detract from the overall impression of the book (very varied contributions—some very detailed and referenced, others very sketchy). My two major criticisms are that much of this material has been published elsewhere in peer-reviewed journals and that several of the chapters are quite badly out of date. Nonetheless, the book does have some merits. The contributors are predominantly based in institutions on this side of the Atlantic, so there is a refreshingly European bias in the studies reviewed and referenced (many of which were not published in English). The scope of the book is very broad, and covers a diversity of topics (from vortex flow patterns in the internal carotid artery to sequencing the genes related to atherosclerosis) which the average neurologist reader would not generally encounter.

I got the impression that the workshop that yielded this book was probably very stimulating, but that it would have been better either to leave it unpublished or expend a great deal of effort in improving the presentation and editorial consistency. I personally found that many of the chapters were interesting but rather sketchy on methodological detail or too uncritical to be really convincing. In summary, I wish I had gone to the workshop and I recommend your Departmental library buys the book if you have a research interest in cerebrovascular disease.

PETER SANDERCOCK