

Book reviews

Modern Perspectives in Clinical Psychiatry. (*Modern Perspectives in Psychiatry Vol 10.*) Edited by John G Howells. (Pp 400; £54.50.) New York: Brunner Mazel, 1988.

Modern Perspectives in Psychiatry is a series which aims to provide clinicians with an up to date overview of theory and practice of the entire breadth of psychiatry. The tenth in the series, *Modern Perspectives in Clinical Psychiatry*, as the title suggests, focuses on clinical issues largely in adult psychiatry. The range of topics covered is wide and broad enough to include chapters such as *Systems Theory in Psychiatry*, *The Place of Computers in Psychiatry* and a chapter on psychodynamics *The Borderline Domain: the "inner script" and other common psychodynamics*. Unfortunately in its attempt to be wide ranging this current series loses its coherence and many of the chapters, including the above-mentioned, are unlikely to have much general appeal. The more "meaty" chapters such as those on the dementias, epidemiology and brain imaging do not contribute anything in the way of a fresh perspective and these topics have been better covered in recent Journal review articles. Furthermore the overall style of presentation is unlikely to appeal to clinicians this side of the Atlantic and coupled with the uninspired content makes it difficult to recommend.

RJ DOLAN

Biochemical and Pharmacological Aspects of Depression (*Topics in Neurochemistry and Neuropharmacology 3*). Edited by Keith E Tipton, Moussa B H Youdim. (Pp 146; £30.00.) Basingstoke: Taylor & Francis 1988.

Most new books on the biology of depression are little more than conference proceedings. *Biochemical and Pharmacological Aspects of Depression* is quite different and provides a clear and brief account of the field in a form that makes it a useful addition to any psychiatric library.

It contains excellent reviews of the neuroendocrinology of depression and the actions of lithium on second messenger systems. Most areas relating to the biochemistry of depression are covered including GABA and histamine.

The book covers the basic sciences of

relevance to depression but is relatively weak on the more difficult clinical studies.

The review of the monoamine hypothesis gives the brain and the platelet equal prominence and the discussions of the clinical pharmacology of anti-depressants is not up to date. For a book published in 1989 there are in fact very few references after 1986.

Despite these criticisms the book as a whole should give a fair impression to the outsider of what is happening in the field of the biology of depression.

STUART CHECKLEY

Neurotransmitters, Drugs and Disease. Edited by RA Webster, CC Jordan. (Pp 474; £19.50.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1989.

The book clearly has several aims and to facilitate and make them more apparent, it is sensibly divided into three parts. The first deals with the basic physiology of neurotransmitter systems, their function, location, inter-relations and the current experimental and clinical methods available for studying their release, binding and re-uptake. The second part permits a more detailed examination of the structure, location in the central nervous system and function of individual neurotransmitters. Finally, the third section integrates this important and basic neuropharmacology into the context of CNS disorders such as Parkinson's disease, Huntington's chorea, epilepsy, the psychoses and neuroses, Alzheimer's disease and pain manifestation and control.

This is an area of neuroscience which, because of its complexity, can be tedious and intimidating. This is not the case here. The well qualified contributors have provided a detailed and accurate but at the same time, highly readable account. The medical student and clinician will find new light shed on the darker areas of neuropharmacology and the clear breakdown of individual chapters will make it possible to adjust the depth of reading or to pick out specific points of interest and enquiry. The clinical application is equally excellent and successfully links basic science to clinical medicine in a way that will be attractive to both the pharmacologist and the clinician.

For those wishing to embark on a detailed study of neurotransmitters and disease and their manipulation by drug therapy or others simply wanting to clarify and bring themselves up to date with this type of CNS disorder, this is a book which will prove to be very satisfactory at an affordable price.

M SAMBROOK

Yearbook of Neurology and Neurosurgery 1989. Edited by DeJong Currier Crowell. (Pp 439; £32.00.) Chicago: Wolfe Medical Publications Ltd. 1989.

Every neurologist must have his or her favourite amongst the many annual reviews of modern progress or recent advances. Over the years I have to confess that this one has been mine. As devotees know, it differs from the other contenders by critically reviewing and summarising a large number of papers in neurology and neurosurgery, illustrating them where necessary and ending the summary with a brief personal comment by the editor. It is this last feature which so attractively brings the text to life. The comments are always apt, often provocative, and not infrequently critical and highly amusing. Crowell's comments in the neurosurgical sections are embellished by a number of other notes and references to papers on the topic in question: a most useful addition. The headache of selecting from such a vast literature must be considerable as the 28 section headings indicate; yet the menu is judicious, appetising and provides a balanced digest of most of the recent new work.

In short, there is something here for everyone employed in the disciplines of neurology, and so good are the summaries, that the reader can fairly quickly and enjoyably bring himself up to date over the areas in which he is lacking special experience or expertise.

The format is pleasing, the illustrations and diagrams are of high quality and the book rests pleasingly and easily in the briefcase, by the bedside or in other small rooms. Strongly recommended.

JMS PEARCE

Neurology for Non-Neurologists. 2nd edition. By Wigbert C. Wiederholt (Pp 356; £25.00). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Ltd.

The first edition of this book became available in 1982. The title "Neurology for Non-Neurologists" suggested a short-cut to the complexities of neurological diagnosis and management but the implied brevity and potential superficial treatment of the subject was not borne out in the text which was reasonably comprehensive and must have endeared the book to General Physicians with little or no neurological experience and certainly to physicians in training. The publication of a second edition six years later perhaps speaks well of the book's reception.