serotonin changes for their therapeutic effect is however now very strong. Serotonin uptake inhibitors were developed initially for the treatment of depression but in recent years they have also been used for other conditions such as obsessive compulsive disorder, bulimia and substance abuse. This book reflects both these developments and present clinical usage. Thus, it devotes much more space to fluoxetine than to any of the other four drugs discussed (clomipramine, fluvoxamine, paroxetine and sertraline).

Seven of the nine chapters are written wholly or in part by the main authors and are aimed principally at clinicians, dealing with such topics as human pharmacogenetics and drug interactions, treatment efficacy and side effects. The other two chapters give good general accounts of the neuropharmacology of serotonin (C A Marsden) and the animal pharmacology of the reuptake inhibitors.

The book is clearly written with some substantial and useful reference lists which cover much of the literature very effectively up to the end of 1989. Most chapters describe their topics fully though the one on the serotonin hypothesis of depression is somewhat thin and is over-focused on CSF studies. A useful addition would have been a short chapter putting the therapeutic effects of the drugs under discussion into context with other kinds of drugs which influence both serotonin function and psychiatric illness. It is potentially confusing to have a chapter entitled "The efficacy of selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors in anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorders" which does not even mention that 5-HT₁₅ agonists rather than reuptake inhibitors are the most frequently used.

Despite these criticisms of specific parts of the book it should be useful to both clinicians and laboratory workers. I am glad to have it on my shelf and I recommend it to others.

G CURZON


Most conventional neurophysiological texts provide comprehensive information on available techniques. However, guidance on the choice of techniques and the planning of an investigation is generally neglected, as is evaluation of the data obtained. In this, the second edition of his book, Dr Liveson has for the most part successfully addressed this problem, using 95 case studies to illustrate the neurophysiological approach to the examination of the patient.

In the first section there are succinct but adequate chapters on the interpretation of electrophysiological data and the findings in diffuse neuromuscular disturbances and localised processes of the peripheral nerves. The author rightly points out that one of the goals of the neurophysiologist is to localise the site of a lesion, but unfortunately other important aspects such as assessing the severity and dynamics of the pathological processes receive scant attention. His choice of EMG of the paracervical muscles as the "single most useful technique to be adopted during the last decade" is idiosyncratic and unfortunately sets the tone for some of the later case studies.

The second section presents selected selections of case studies covering nearly all conceivable neuromuscular and localised peripheral nerve disorders. In each case the clinical data are presented and analysed using questions and answers format. A plan of action for the electrophysiological examination is then set out, followed by a clear presentation of the electrophysiological data. The reader is encouraged to evaluate these data by being asked a further series of questions, to which, finally, answers are provided together with a summary of the electrodiagnostic interpretation and clinical outcome of the case. This formula works surprisingly well, and while it lacks the natural flow of a conventional text book, there is comprehensive cross referencing of similar cases, enabling the reader to approach the book from many angles. The text is supplemented by many instructive illustrations, and contains a long list of references.


The author states that "beyond the scope of this chapter!" And, is it true that "It is impossible to take care of patients with seizure disorders without high quality EEG" (Gastroenterology and Lippincott)? If so and have treated a large number of patients who have been kept free of fits despite my failure to correct this precept.