chapters by Hermann and his group, examining multiaetiological models of psychosocial dysfunction and psychological assessment of patients with non epileptic seizures. Some data have been published elsewhere; their failure to find associations between polytherapy and phenobarbitone prescription and depression is contrary to some other work in the literature.

Bennett, the overall editor provides a chapter on cognitive aspects of epilepsy and anticonvulsant drugs. Although his phenomenology is awry when discussing distinctions between the hallucinations of an aura and the experiences of schizophrenic patients, his conclusion that anticonvulsant drugs affect cognition and that differences exist between drugs, favouring Carbamazepine and sodium valproate is of relevance to recent debate.

Other chapters cover temporo-limbic epilepsy, a concept to be welcomed, in which the interictal behavioural syndrome is reviewed and given some validity. Oddly, psychosis is not discussed in this context. Mungas, in one of the few chapters providing original data suggests from complex cluster analysis a figure of 21% for those suffering from "the proposed behavioural syndrome". Interestingly, this cluster was interlinked with complex partial seizures, providing further indirect evidence of association between limbic seizures and such behaviour. The other chapters review temporal lobectomy, Wada testing, bio-feedback and corpus callosotomy. They are of variable interest, but the only one containing new data is by Sakin and his colleagues from Philadelphia.

Overall, this book is a worthwhile contribution. But the irritation was driven by the discovery that there was not a single European author on a subject that has its roots in the European literature, going back 150 years. Sour grapes on my behalf perhaps, or ignorance by the editor. I leave others to judge.

MR TRIMBLE

Handbook of Parkinson's Disease/2nd Edition. Revised and Expanded. (Neurological Disease & Therapy Series/13). Edited by WM C KOLLER. (Pp 618; Illustrated; Price: \$150.00.) 1992. New York, Marcel Dekker Inc. ISBN 0-8247-8675-0.

This is the revised and expanded second edition of a book first published in 1987. It retains the same chapter headings of the first edition, and many of the same authors. As you might expect junior colleagues of many of the first contributors have been delegated to update the original chapter.

Research in Parkinson's disease appears to be progressing at an amazing pace, yet this book, five years on from the first is not greatly different, and thereby puts in perspective the ever expanding activity of research meetings. Probably the most significant recent discovery is an abnormality in complex one of the mitochondrial respiratory chain. Strangely there is only one short mention of this particular research. Nevertheless the chapter on aetiology by Langston and Tanner remains the most interesting. Yet we still don't know whether Parkinson's disease is an inherited or an acquired disorder, or both. Other chapters too don't indicate a great deal of progress. Levodopa remains the most effective symptomatic treatment of Parkinson's disease. Brain implants remain an experimental procedure;

even the most optimistic appraisal of implantation indicates that only a minute number of patients will benefit from them. Many of the symptoms resist all treatment, and ten years from the diagnosis many patients are profoundly disabled. Thus it is pleasing to see that psychosocial aspects and the rehabilitation approach are not neglected here.

This book covers all aspects of Parkinson's Disease and is the best general text on the topic. However, if you already own the first edition there may be not a lot of point buying the second.

CHRIS CLOUGH

Electroconvulsive Therapy/2nd edition. By RICHARD ABRAMS. (Pp 340; Price £35.00.) 1992. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-507057-7.

Perhaps uniquely among physical treatments used in psychiatry, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) continues to excite controversy, with passionate advocates and equally passionate detractors. The public perception of ECT is coloured by horror stories and popular fiction based on practices that are depicted as cavalier, cruel and causative of brain damage. Richard Abrams's text is thus a comprehensive and apposite account of the subject. Abrams practises in Chicago, is well known to aficionados of ECT as a prolific author on, and advocate of, the treatment. The first edition of 1988 made a considerable impression, and it shows the interest in the field that a new edition, produced only four years later, should refer to so much more contemporary work.

It begins with a brief historical account of convulsive therapies and continues with a useful review of studies of the efficacy of ECT. There seems little doubt that genuine ECT is superior to sham ECT in the treatment of depression, but the advantage of ECT over adequate doses of antidepressant drugs is less clear. Abrams is very open about the methodological problems that bedevil some studies, and points out the importance of prospective studies. He also makes the rather curious, but not necessarily inadmissible, point that anecdotal clinical experience and the "cumulative wisdom of teachers and colleagues", as he terms it, may have just as much relevance as the controlled study in the evaluation and use of ECT. The next section deals with clinical pointers to successful outcome of the treatment. There is not much that is new here; the presence of psychomotor retardation, stupor and psychotic, mood-congruent delusions provides the best prediction of success, while a more 'neurotic' presentation does not. Further chapters deal with the physiological changes during and after ECT, and the risk associated with ECT.

The core of the book is concerned with practical aspects of ECT. Abrams makes the case for preferring unilateral administration of ECT to the non-dominant cerebral hemisphere to bilateral administration, although the latter is appropriate if the former is ineffective. This recommendation is exactly contrary to that made by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. However, all are agreed that bilateral ECT is followed by more severe memory disturbance than unilateral non-dominant ECT.

The remainder of the book consists of protocols for the administration of ECT, discussions of consent and some fascinating advice about medico-legal issues.

This book represents the views of an unabashed advocate of ECT. It is not too much of a caricature of Abrams's argument to suggest that he presents ECT as something of panacea, which should be offered to a very much wider range of patients than is customary in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, the book is balanced, and difficult questions are not shirked.

MT ISSAC

SHORT NOTICES

Experimental Approaches to Anxiety and Depression. (Biological Council Symposium on Drug Action. Edited by J MARTIN ELLIOTT, DAVID J HEAL AND CHARLES A MARSDEN. (Pp 272; Illustrated; Price: £55.00.) 1992. Chichester, J Wiley & Sons Ltd. ISBN 0-471-93096-2.

World Health Forum: An International Journal of Health Development. Vol. 13, No. 2/3, 1992. (Pp 276; Annual subscription Sw.fr 68.-) 1992. GENEVA, WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION. IX ISSN 0251 2432.

Treatment of Dementias: A New Generation of Progress. Series: Advances in Behavioral Biology Vol. 40. Edited by E M MEYER, J W SIMPKINS, J YAMAMOTO AND F T CREWS. (Pp 533; Price: \$115.00.) 1992. New York, Plenum Publishing Corp. ISBN 0-306-44228-0.

Neurology for the Psychiatry Speciality Board Review. (Brunner/Mazel Continuing Education in Psychiatry Series No. 2). By LEON A WEISBERG, MD. Series Editor: Gene Usdin, MD. (Pp 129; Price: \$27.50.) 1992. New York, Raven Press. ISBN 0-87630-684-9.

NOTICES

Eighth Wye College Neuropathology Symposium: 5-9 July 1993. Designed for neuroscientists, neuropathologists, neurologists and neurosurgeons the programme highlights important areas of recent developments. Course fee of £110 includes full board and lodging for 5 days. Details from: Dr W Gibb, Dept of Neurology, Institute of Psychiatry, De Crespigny Park, London SE5 8AF Tel: 071 703 5411.

The VIII International Congress on Neuromuscular Diseases, Japan
The VIII International Congress on Neuromuscular Diseases will be held on 10-15 July 1994, Kyoto, Japan. The programme will focus on new developments in morphology, electrophysiology, immunology, genetics and treatment. For further information contact: The Secretariat, Intermed Inc, 4-8-11-306 Tananawa, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 108, Japan. (Telephone: 81-3-3444-5371; Fax: 81-3-3444-5580).