

has risen steadily to alarming heights, still making huge fortunes for the purveyors but now inflicting great damage on the nation's health.

A number of comparisons have lately been made between addiction to alcohol and to cannabis. The work of Ledermann and later of de Lint has shown conclusively that the amount of alcoholism is proportional to the amount of alcohol consumed, the amount manufactured and the number of outlets for sale. The effects of education and of advertising are also pertinent. This may indicate the need for a strong programme of education plus vigorous action against big pushers and subculture leaders in the use of cannabis.

A. SPENCER PATERSON.

Psychedelic Drugs: Psychological, Medical and Social Issues. By BRIAN WELLS. London: Penguin Books. 1973. Pp. 239. Index 10 pp. Price 50p.

Although I prefer the term *psychotomimetic* for such compounds (to embrace all compounds with hallucinogenic properties), I appreciate that the term *psychedelic* accurately describes those better-known drugs which form the subject matter of this book.

Mescaline, LSD-25, psilocybin and cannabis are dealt with exhaustively. Their origins and early therapeutic uses are described, and there then follows a critical examination of the problems arising from their abuse (and its escalation), the likelihood of their causing brain and chromosomal damage, and the possible precipitation of psychotic illness. A useful analysis is also made of the possible association between the use (abuse) of these drugs and the increase of aggressive and criminal behaviour, and of the enhancement of sexual, creative and religious-mystical experience.

This book—possibly the most clearly presented text on this subject for some years—certainly examines all the evidence, and, much to its credit, this is presented in an objective factual way, leaving the reader to form his own personal conclusions from it.

In spite of all that may be written about drugs and their effects, there is no doubt that for these particular drugs no hard and fast predictions about their subjective effects can be made. These depend primarily on what the person is expecting or wanting to experience, upon his personal motivations, and upon the setting in which the drug is taken. I am almost convinced that these factors are more important determinants of drug action than the true biochemical effects of the substance itself.

Conclusion: a detailed and well-balanced account of a difficult subject; well worth reading.

T. R. WILSON.

Drug Dealers—Taking Action. By RICHARD BLUM and ASSOCIATES. London: Jossey Bass. 1973. Pp. xxii+307. Index 4 pp. Price £4.95.

This book is a companion to several volumes produced by the International Research Group on Drug Legislation and Programmes which have been published in the hope of providing information and perspectives helpful in improving the present international drug activities, and useful in planning new legislation, and programmes designed to reduce problems associated with psycho-active drugs. The book succeeds in these aims by reviewing what is known about an emotionally charged area ('selling', 'dealing' or 'pushing' drugs illicitly) in an informative balanced and objective way. The authors include accounts of previous original studies of drug dealers which they have carried out themselves. There are sections on trafficking, policing, what happens to those arrested, and policy making. The readership of a book like this must be small among psychiatrists but those interested in the social aspects of dependence on drugs will find it most useful.

THOMAS BEWLEY.

TEXTBOOKS

Psychiatry. By E. W. ANDERSON and W. H. TRETOWAN. London: Baillière Tindall. Third edition, 1973. Pp. 368+viii. Index 5 pp. Price £2.00.

Modern Synopsis of Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry. By A. M. FREEDMAN, H. I. KAPLAN and B. J. SADOCK. Edinburgh: Churchill-Livingstone, for Williams and Wilkins Co., Baltimore. Illustrated edition, 1972. Pp. 800+xiv. Index 53 pp. Price £7.25.

Which textbook shall we recommend to medical students? There are so many; most teachers feel dissatisfied with all, and many even try writing their own. Here are two books, one a British stalwart in a new edition, the other a synopsis of a much larger, multi-author work.

Anderson and Tretowan's book is concise, it covers a lot of ground, I agreed with nearly all it said, and yet cannot pretend that I found it compulsive reading. If only it were a little livelier.

The American text covers an immense field, from 'behavioural sciences', history, syndromes and psychotherapies to such modern phenomena as Black Power and communal marriages. Many topics seem cursorily dealt with owing to the condensation from the larger original, but I found myself often absorbed and wanting to read more. The many illustrations capture interest as soon as the pages are opened. Waxy flexibility is one thing thus to be perpetuated in the student's mind, and one realizes that the authors'