

Attention and Schizophrenia: Neurobiological Bases.

By ROBERT D. OADES. London: Pitman. 1982. Pp 343. £22.00.

The author has made an heroic attempt to review all the literature which is pertinent either to the physiological basis of schizophrenia or to the physiological basis of attention. As a consequence he has provided a most valuable bibliography. However, so much information is provided that the task of integrating it into a coherent whole has proved impossible. In the three chapters Oades proposes that schizophrenia is primarily a disorder of "attention". This is a popular idea but although this book covers more evidence than before it remains unconvincing, particularly as 'attention' is never precisely defined. Indeed Oades spreads his net for experimental evidence so widely that the more general term 'cognition' might be more appropriate. Alongside his emphasis on attention the author considers that thought disorder is the key symptom of schizophrenia. Once again this term is used very non-specifically. Sometimes the term 'disorders of thinking' seem to be meant which, while not controversial, is too imprecise to be useful. At other times 'formal thought disorder' is implied. Recent work by Andreason and others suggests that this symptom is not shown by the majority of schizophrenics and is probably commoner in mania. For the remaining chapters the author considers in turn several brain areas (e.g. hippocampus, septum, etc.) and several neurotransmitter systems (e.g. dopamine, serotonin, etc.). A great deal of loosely related evidence is reviewed in each section. Ill-controlled and anecdotal studies are sometimes given equal weight with careful double-blind trials, but in spite of this no coherent theme emerges. So many aspects of the brain have been considered that the author can be sure that whatever the organic basis of schizophrenia turns out to be he will have covered it somewhere in his book.

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Biological Aspects of Schizophrenia and Addiction.

Edited by GWYNNETH HEMMINGS. Chichester: John Wiley. 1982. Pp 277. £18.50.

The Schizophrenia Association of Great Britain, a voluntary organisation dedicated to the promotion of biological research in schizophrenia, is well placed to explore some of the more controversial or less well-established hypotheses surrounding the subject. This book is based on papers presented at a conference organised by the Association.

Schizophrenia and addiction are connected via the endorphin system so that the review of endorphins in

schizophrenia (Terenius) is an appropriate starting point. Other topics in the section on pathogenesis include genetic control of catecholamines (Wetterberg), biologically active peptides in the urine of schizophrenics (Edminson), gonadotrophin secretion in chronic schizophrenia (Ferrier) and dopamine (Crow).

Food allergy inevitably makes an appearance and we learn that it is enhanced by smoking and the use of the contraceptive pill (Grant). Indeed the claim is made that 'addiction' to food or environmental chemicals is 'the central kingpin of the majority of emotional degenerative disorders' (Philpott).

A whole section is devoted to 'the exploration of a hypothesis' concerning the possible role of prostaglandins in the pathogenesis of schizophrenia. The recommended treatment derived from this hypothesis is γ -linolenic acid and penicillin, the effects of which on 10 patients are reported by Vaddadi. A hypothesis which depends on an alleged similarity between alcohol withdrawal states and schizophrenia and mediated by either deficiency or excess of prostaglandin E, (Horrobin) is, however, less than convincing.

Sections on endocrinology and pharmacology and addiction, including comprehensive reviews on the actions of cannabis (Ashton) and benodiazepine dependence (Lader) complete the book.

The papers included vary from the soberly scientific to the wildly speculative but most contrive to be interesting and stimulating. It is anyone's guess which of the various avenues presented will turn out to be blind alleys but full marks to the Schizophrenia Association for having the nerve to explore them.

KENNETH DAVISON, *Consultant Psychiatrist and Lecturer, University of Newcastle upon Tyne*

The Practice of Psychotherapy: 506 Questions and Answers. By LEWIS R. WOLBERG. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1982. Pp 413. \$30.00.

Despite its title, this book is not a textbook of psychotherapy but a comprehensive description of Wolberg's own practice as a psychotherapist and psychiatrist. It is presented in a rather idiosyncratic form, being the 506 questions his students and others have most frequently asked, along with his answers.

The questions range from medically naive enquiries on the place of drugs in schizophrenia and the side effects of ECT to highly technical ones on aspects of psychoanalytic theory. The answers vary in length from a line or two to several pages, and whilst his style is admirably clear, some readers may find the catechism format irritating.

The greater part of the book is concerned with theory and technique in the dynamic therapies and covers the spectrum from psychoanalysis to behaviour therapy and hypnosis. There is a long chapter on the management of 'special conditions', which includes schizophrenia, depression, alcoholism, phobias, anxiety reactions, the chronically mentally ill and personality disorders, and here he emphasises the importance of a non-dogmatic approach and a clinically sensitive use of both physical and dynamic treatments.

I enjoyed this book and I think it would be a pleasant if non-essential addition to the departmental library. The general psychiatrist will find in it a dynamic approach which respects organic treatments; the non-medical psychotherapist should find an invaluable guide to the boundaries between medical and dynamic methods; the psychotherapist might learn a lot about answering questions with clarity and good sense.

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The Psychotherapeutic Conspiracy. By ROBERT LANGS. New York: Jason Aronson. 1982. Pp 338. \$34.50.

Alarmed by the vast growth and bewildering array of the 'psychotherapies', Langs has written a valuable polemical account of their vicissitudes. Drawing an object-relations theory he takes a detailed look at unconscious needs of patients and therapists, and the emotional disturbance they hope to solve.

Patients often have a need to find and seemingly suffer at the hands of a psychologically impoverished therapist in order to appease an unconscious sense of guilt and masochistic drive. Therapists often project unconscious areas of themselves into the patient, ridding their pathology into the designated ill person.

Staying at the patient's surface tends to be easier, protective, attractively simple and far less threatening than attempting to delve into the patient-therapist interaction where Langs sees the truth. The naive view that the unconscious speaks directly, together with an apparent understanding of manifest content is none other than a seduction between therapist and patient.

He classifies behavioural, cognitive, primal scream, EST etc. as lie therapies in which patient and therapist collude to avoid seeking out psychological truths. This is achieved by avoiding focussing on Langs' bipersonal field, and the 'here and now' of the transference-countertransference, which he feels can be classified and analysed in its most minute detail, to reveal the truth of the object-relationships.

Langs instructively looks into Breuer's patient Anna

O and Freud's early *Studies in Hysteria*, trying to analyse the various mésalliances between patient and therapist. He attempts to link the various levels of misunderstanding within these treatments with different schools of psychotherapy today.

This good book will be at best scorned and misunderstood and, at worst, unread by the large number of people who are called therapists.

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Psychotherapy Research: Methodological and Efficacy Issues. American Psychiatric Association Commission on Psychiatric Therapies, Washington D.C. 1982. Pp 261. \$15.00.

The American Psychiatric Association has undertaken a major assignment—no less than the compilation of a psychiatric treatment manual. This is planned to serve as a guide to the practising clinician. In the light of the considerable differences psychiatrists exhibit in their contemporary diagnostic and therapeutic approaches, one does wonder whether psychiatry is ready to receive such a manual. Only time will tell. In the meanwhile, we can note the results of the first efforts by the APA, a volume prepared by a Commission on the Psychotherapies, composed of the many distinguished names in American psychiatry and under the chairmanship of the seemingly indefatigable, Toksoz Karasu.

Perhaps anticipating critical reaction to the inclusion of certain psychological therapies in the definitive manual, the Commission has grappled head-on with the question of whether psychotherapy works or not. The conclusion arrived at is that: ". . . . psychotherapy appears efficacious more often than not, but the conditions under which it works are not well understood". Another important conclusion the Commission reaches is that ". . . . most research data available do not adequately reflect the work of the clinicians as actually practiced. It is especially true that long-term psychotherapy and psychoanalysis have not been adequately evaluated". The reader is urged—quite rightly in my view—to bear in mind the "large body of clinical experience and knowledge, accumulated by practitioners over many decades", and to consider this clinical lore in any discussion about efficacy.

These conclusions are reached following a thorough, but at the same time succinct, examination of several methodological topics, including the nature of control groups, the selection and assignment of patients in clinical trials, research designs, and measurement of outcome. There are useful chapters, as well, on the