

the use of cocaine in the middle classes in the USA of 48% between 1985 and 1989, followed by "This must be interpreted with caution, as many other measures show problems from crack use to be increasing". (p. 18) These other measures are not specified. Sadly, no data are presented from the Bahamas, on which presumably the authors have a mass of clinical and demographic data.

So, while the authors may well have had much to tell us, their way of telling invalidates their own message. Their book is essentially a fire and brimstone sermon, and we British are unlikely to be that easily intimidated into acceptance of their alarmist view particularly when it is so evangelically expressed.

But what if they are right? It makes you think.

DOUGLAS CAMERON, *Senior Lecturer in Substance Misuse, University of Leicester, and Leicestershire Community Alcohol and Drugs Services*

Mind: The Complete Guide to Psychiatric Drugs. By RON LACEY. London: Ebury Press. 1991. 200 pp. £7.99.

It has been a cause of personal regret that some years ago, *Mind* adopted the position of campaigning for the mentally ill as if they were solely an under-privileged minority whose need was to have their civil liberties protected. I therefore regarded a guide to psychotropic drugs for the layman by this organisation as a possible change of heart. Sadly my hopes were dashed, and I found reading this volume an unpleasant experience.

The author's view seems to be that, with rare exceptions, psychiatrists and other doctors are at best misguided and ill-informed, and at worst, willing disciples of evil pharmaceutical companies, who peddle dangerous substances to the innocent populace for financial gain with no regard for their health. His view of drug therapy is that, for the most part, it is probably unnecessary, and frequently harmful. He believes that the prevention and cure of all psychiatric illness lies elsewhere. Like all good propagandists, he tries to be careful not to overstate his case, and the book is peppered with statements to "consult your doctor" before stopping any treatment.

The book is divided into sections on anxiolytic, anti-depressant, neuroleptic, and antimanic drugs; there are also short chapters on anti-Parkinsonian and stimulant drugs. After brief historical introductions and descriptions of diseases, the text consists of descriptions of drugs that are mainly derived from the data sheets. No simplified explanations of their psychopharmacology are provided, but reference is made to selected research papers whose conclusions are acceptable to the basic premise that detrimental side-effects and drug interactions exist. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the dangers of taking medication, but the author fails to differentiate between described side-effects and adverse

reactions. No mention is made of risk/benefit ratios. It is perhaps not surprising that the book ends with a guide to complaints procedures. There are a significant number of errors in the text and the content is not up-to-date.

I was left with the feeling that if this volume needed to be produced, it should have been written by an experienced clinician with an interest in psychopharmacology.

It is quite possible that a vulnerable section of the community will read it and be influenced adversely by its contents. I do not recommend it as suitable reading material for any interested patient, client, consumer, or their families, and hope that a future publication giving a more balanced assessment of drug therapy in psychiatry will be written for lay readership.

SIDNEY LEVINE, *Consultant Psychiatrist, Royal Oldham Hospital, Oldham OL1 2JH*

Handbook of Psychological Assessment 2nd edition. By G. GOLDSTEIN and M. HERSEN. Oxford: Pergamon Press. 1990. 608 pp. \$90.00.

The editors felt they needed to update and expand the first edition of the Handbook which appeared in 1984. In this endeavour they are probably wise. Much, if not most, of contemporary psychology has devoted itself to measurement. In fact many psychologists view accurate measurement as the basis of psychology. However, what is measured and how measurement is conceptualised can reflect a vast array of different viewpoints. The concept of the discipline of psychology as a homogeneous body is erroneous, more realistically it is an umbrella term for a number of different schools of thought which can approach their subject matter from different perspectives and with different goals. Here lies the difficulty in tackling such a potentially broad but fundamental topic as psychological assessment and including its subject matter in one, albeit large, volume. In such a difficult task, the editors have made a valiant effort. They have put together a well written, scholarly and comprehensive text. There are ten sections made up of 23 chapters. These sections include: historical introduction; the psychometric foundations of testing; assessment of intelligence; achievement, aptitude and interest; neuropsychological assessment; interviewing personality assessment; behavioural assessment; assessment and intervention; and special topics – which consists of chapters on the assessment of minority group members and computer-assisted assessment. These last two chapters are especially welcome.

There is a comprehensive feel to the volume in both its coverage – for example there are separate chapters on children and adults where appropriate within the different sections – and in emphasising the function of assessment information – such as directions for