

**Cognitive Assessment for Clinicians.** By JOHN R. HODGES. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994. 242 pp. £35.00 (hb), £16.50 (pb).

At first sight cognitive assessment is daunting. Why this should be is not completely clear except that a thorough understanding of cognitive assessment requires expertise across the boundaries of clinical skill, neuroanatomy and neuropsychology. Not many trainees feel comfortable in all of these domains. Dr Hodges, however, a lecturer and consultant in neurology at Cambridge, is at home in these fields, both as a practitioner and teacher.

As a teacher Hodges appreciates the value of sketching the ground to be covered, of presenting his material with clarity, making use of simple figures and of summarising and reinforcing the text by the use of tables. The feature which marks the book out, making it more than just a recipe book of tests or a rehash of well-documented matching of cognitive deficits to brain lesions, is the marriage of theory and practice and the inclusion in that union of the benefits of the burgeoning research in cognitive neuropsychology.

To give an overview, the book commences with a theoretical survey of distributed and localised cognitive function. Following a brief section on history-taking and physical examination, the core of the book describes bedside testing of cognitive function, which is firmly based upon the earlier theoretical framework. Case histories illustrate the different cognitive deficits seen in various conditions. Finally, some standardised mental test schedules are critically considered. An appendix describes 23 neuropsychological tests with addresses for obtaining them. There is a sensible bibliography and an index.

The refreshing nature of the book cannot, however, be so briefly conveyed. Its treatment of memory, delineating episodic and semantic memory while dismissing the commonly used concept of "short-term memory" is excitingly clear. The nebulous notion (with no pun intended) of "clouding of consciousness" as a defining characteristic of delirium is clarified. Neurolinguistics is introduced and the language of cognitive neuropsychology pervades the text. It is intriguing stuff at an accessible level.

Although bringing benefits of clarity and cost, the lack of immediate references might seem a nuisance to some. I thought that a brief discussion of the value of formal neuropsychological assessment might be useful, rather than just stating in the case histories whether or not it was thought appropriate. There are a number of typographical errors, ranging from the banal to the nonsensical.

The book is aimed especially at trainees in neurology and psychiatry. I have no regrets about buying the book, both its theoretical and clinical content having proved useful. I would recommend it at any stage of training. It both stimulates and increases confidence in

an important clinical skill. Moreover, I am sure it will succeed in encouraging the development of those with "a nascent, but underdeveloped, interest in cognitive function".

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**New Pharmacological Approaches to the Therapy of Depressive Disorders.** Edited by J. MENDELWICZ, N. BRUNELLO, S. Z. LANGER and G. RACAGNI. Basel: Karger. 1993. 195 pp. US\$178.50 (hb).

The title of this book is undeniably attractive. Unfortunately, those who hope to discover within its pages novel therapeutic strategies for their long-suffering patients will be disappointed. The volume is the proceedings of a workshop and session held in Brussels in 1992, which inaugurated the European Decade of Brain Research. In a somewhat dream-like journey we encounter a mixed assortment of reviews, reports of panel discussions and an eloquent address from the Vice President of the Commission of the European Community, in which terms like "subsidiarity" are likely to strike even more terror into the reader than the "chimeras" and "site directed mutagenesis" offered by Schwartz in the chapter on molecular biology.

Some of the reviews are very good. For example, de Montigny *et al* describe the electrophysiological effects of repeated antidepressant treatment in experimental animals, while Sedvall explains how ligand binding studies with positron emission tomography can throw light on the actions of psychotropic drugs at monoamine receptors, and thereby improve practical therapeutics. Paykel and Post offer excellent chapters on efficacy and selection of different treatments in the management of mood disorders. Many of these contributions, however, are fairly familiar and can be found in fuller form elsewhere. In this context, the reminder in the chapter on international cooperation by Boller & Lese of Europe's long tradition of travelling scholars ("clerici vagantes") seems a little superfluous.

The book is expensive but well produced with much in it of interest. Overall, though, its natural home is probably the coffee table rather than the bookshelf.

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**Sleep.** Edited by ROSEMARY COOPER. London: Chapman & Hall. 1993. 702 pp. £79.00 (hb).

When I was an SHO I heard a lecture on sleep by a neuropsychiatrist. So entertaining was it that certain facts stayed with me: a man called Randy Gardener for