

Book Reviews

PSYCHOSOMATICS

Psychotherapeutic Action of the Physician: Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of Psychosomatic Medicine. Edited by L. CHERTOK and M. SAPIR. Basel, Switzerland: S. Karger A.G. 1972. Pp. 346. Price £10.05.

This volume provides in three languages a comprehensive set of papers surveying every aspect of psychosomatic medicine, with particular emphasis on doctor-patient relationships. The reports derive from most European countries together with American contributions.

Many of the records cover the work, including research, of numerous 'Balint groups', a tribute to our own late Dr. Michael Balint. Further, investigation seeks to penetrate not only the secrets of psychosomatic ailments but also of many more subtle and abstruse diagnostic and pathological anomalies. Other matters under scrutiny concern sociological factors, industrial medicine, abortion, sexual abnormalities, delinquency, allergies and cognate topics. Moreover, those with leanings towards the laboratory will be especially interested in a suspension theory which seeks to elucidate the problems of anxiety and depression through a study of surfactant agents, micellar structures and coactive states in association with psychoactive drugs.

All in all, these Proceedings constitute an exceptionally worthwhile collection of studies, all-embracing interesting and informative. The volume is excellently produced and the price, considering the nature of the contents, is not excessive.

H. C. BECCLE.

Physiology, Emotion and Psychosomatic Illness. Ciba Foundation Symposium 8 (new series). Edited by R. PORTER and J. KNIGHT. Elsevier/Excerpta Medica/North Holland. 1972. Pp. 421. Price Dfl. 53.00.

This volume records the presentation of 17 papers and associated discussion by a group of clinical and non-clinical scientists from Poland, Sweden, Italy, U.S.A. and Britain under the chairmanship of Sir Denis Hill in April 1972. The disciplines represented are psychology, ethology, physiology, neurophysiology, neuroendocrinology, medicine, paediatrics, psychoanalysis and psychiatry.

In spite of the obligatory contribution on semantics,

the difficulties of interdisciplinary communication are reflected in the discussion. The topics covered vary from psychoanalytic theory (Sandler) through peptic ulceration in rats (Weiss) to the taming of wolves (Ginsburg). The presentations range from the brief and anecdotal (Nemiah) to detailed accounts of the most elegant animal experiments (e.g. Fonberg, Henry, Hofer, Weiss). Although there is much fascinating and clinically relevant material in the non-clinical papers, Lader's masterly critique of the concept of psychosomatic medicine and the papers on heart disease (Tibblin), subarachnoid haemorrhage (Storey), obesity (Grinker) and bronchial asthma (Aitken) are likely to be of more immediate appeal to clinicians. The term 'psychosomatic' is heavily criticized for reflecting an outmoded dualism, but no satisfactory substitute is suggested. Psychosomatic illness is clearly a more sophisticated concept now than in the days of the personality stereotype theories.

This book is beautifully produced, even to the extent of a Picasso illustration on the cover, and its contents fully maintain the high standard of Ciba Foundation Symposia. It can be recommended to all who are interested in current views on the borderland between somatic medicine and psychiatry and its physiological substrate.

K. DAVISON.

CULTURAL ASPECTS

Transcultural Research in Mental Health. Edited by WILLIAM P. LEBRA. The University Press of Hawaii. 1972. Pp. 440. Price \$14.00.

This book contains 27 papers read at an interdisciplinary Conference on 'Social Change and Cultural Factors in Mental Health' held at the East-West Center, University of Hawaii, in March 1969. The Conference was the second of a series of four planned, and the present volume is the second published under the editorship of William Lebra, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Hawaii.

These conferences were attended by sociologists, anthropologists, psychiatrists and psychologists, both from East-Asian countries and from the United States of America. Hence the articles, written by specialists from such different fields and from such different countries, are very diverse and cover a colourful