

extensive. The chapter of sixty-two pages on anti-psychotic drugs is especially refreshing to read.

Criticisms of the book are a tendency to present biochemical explanations for illness and drug action too convincingly, and some overall unevenness. For example, the use of M.A.O.I.'s is cursory and there is no citing of British work on maintenance treatment in schizophrenia. These are minor blemishes and a general psychiatrist will find the book a good read. But, for trainees, it needs to be tempered by one of our own more local, and sober, texts on psychotropic drugs.

The book's main disadvantage is price: £22.00 for a slim, though well bound, volume. Hence, it is to be recommended to a well-funded library.

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Psychiatry. 5th edition. By SIR WILLIAM TRETOWAN and A. C. P. SIMS. Eastbourne: Bailliere Tindall. 1983. Pp 400. £6.95.

The latest edition of this well-known textbook is written clearly, succinctly and with care. Excellent, concise descriptions of psychiatric disorders are to be found here. The contents include new chapters on child and adolescent psychiatry, the psychiatry of old age, and the 1983 Mental Health Act. In this otherwise useful book, the chapter on liaison psychiatry is disappointing. Sulphonamides, we are told, may give rise to depressive states, but the well documented psychiatric complications of salient drugs in current use—such as cytotoxic drugs and levodopa—are omitted. No mention is made of the psychiatric concomitants of cancer, nor of the work on the relationship between Type A personality and coronary disease; the section on parasuicide is inadequate. But aside from chapter 18 which, in my view, requires major revision, the fifth edition of this book deserves to retain its popularity as an informative, balanced account of clinical psychiatry.

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An Outline of Sociology as Applied to Medicine. 2nd edition. By DAVID ARMSTRONG. Bristol: John Wright. 1983. Pp 151. £5.50.

Since this book was first published in 1981 it has quickly become recognised as one of the three best introductions to medical sociology for medical students. This second edition is slightly longer and slightly restructured. Although the re-ordering of four chapters does not provide the "better sequence" which David Armstrong hopes for, the newly included discussions of relevant further reading at the end of

each chapter are excellent. The updating of references and expansion of material on lay theories, the family and social support ensure that the book will continue to appeal to medical students and sociology students alike.

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Neurotransmitters and Drugs. 2nd edition. By ZYGMUNT L. KRUK and CHRISTOPHER J. PYCOCK. Beckenham: Croom Helm. 1983. Pp 205. £6.95.

Publication of a second edition of this book is a measure of its deserved success among 'students of medicine, pharmacy and other biological disciplines'. Within its 200 pages, central and peripheral aspects of the amino transmitters, the amino acid and peptide systems and some endogenous miscellaneous compounds (trace amines, prostaglandins, etc.) are systematically presented; the drugs considered are those which modify or mimic actions of these known or putative transmitters and others which interact non-specifically with them (anaesthetics, etc.). There are suggestions for further reading, more than half of these being for material published subsequent to the first edition. Also included is a useful list of chemical and proprietary drug names.

The book is intended for undergraduate students and simplifications are therefore to be expected. Some however are disconcerting e.g. on p. 49 "adrenoceptors in the heart are called β -adrenoceptors and β -adrenoceptors found anywhere else outside the CNS are called β_2 -adrenoceptors"—what about the gastrointestinal tract and adipose tissue? In a discussion of drugs used in Parkinsonism (p. 92) deprenyl (Eldepryl) should have been discussed in terms of its activity as a selective MAO B inhibitor rather than as an indirectly acting DA agonist. There are also some mistakes e.g. on Fig. 3.8, 3,4-dihydroxyphenylglycol is shown as being formed from aldehyde dehydrogenase.

This is an excellent and concise book and is to be recommended for its intended market but I believe that it has little to offer the trainee psychiatrist apart perhaps from the chapter on amino acids and peptides. As an example when discussing noradrenaline metabolism the text does not mention that 3-methoxy-4-hydroxy phenylglycol is the major metabolite of central noradrenaline.

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