

Katona's conclusions is that we need to know more of the natural history of the disorder to plan future provision. This is particularly important for younger patients with mild to moderate cognitive impairment but relatively little physical illness, whose care needs we are unclear about at present.

Volans gives a comprehensive overview of assessment from a psychological perspective but offers little on management. This is surprising as it is reiterated in other chapters that we still seem to be a long way off physiological treatment and thus psychosocial management is our only avenue. Norman's contribution on models of care and defining adequate standards is characteristically excellent. Lindsay, in a wide-ranging chapter on future models of care in changing times, takes us via robotic home helps and talking pill-boxes to the inevitable conclusion that, whatever the model, the quality of care depends on staff "recruitment, numbers, training, management, support and morale".

This is a very good book both for trainees and for use in refreshing those engaged in running a service.

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Yearbook of Psychiatry and Applied Mental Health 1989. Edited by J. A. TALBOT, A. FRANCES, D. X. FREEDMAN, H. Y. MELTZER, J. E. SCHOWALTER and HERBERT WEINER. London: Wolff Medical Publications. 1989. 479 pp. £40.00.

Yearbook Medical Publishers Incorporated survey nearly 700 US and overseas medical and allied health journals from which are abstracted articles for their series covering clinical topics from anaesthesia to vascular surgery and, in this case, psychiatry and applied mental health. The most recent articles reviewed were published in June 1988. Abstracts from these articles are presented under 13 broad headings including "Biological psychiatry", "Genetics", "General clinical topics", "Clinical psychiatry", "Psychotherapy", "Psychopharmacology, law and psychiatry", and "Community psychiatry".

The abstracts are clearly written and each is followed by one or two sentences of comment from an editor. The result is a fairly small volume which is an excellent reference for quite recent research on any topic. The index (covering subjects and authors) is competently arranged. Many of the articles are in journals not usually read by the average psychiatrist, particularly on this side of the Atlantic. Nevertheless, articles are abstracted from the major European journals, including this Journal, of course!

A random sampling of topics showed that 13 articles were included on antidepressants and post-traumatic stress disorder while there were six on involuntary

commitment. The latter were abstracted from North American journals but European readers will be interested in the discussion of the conflict between civil liberties and the need for involuntary treatment.

In the section on psychotherapy, cognitive and behavioural approaches predominate, reflecting the diminution of psychoanalytic approaches in the practice of American psychiatry.

Overall, this book could be recommended as an excellent reference, less thorough by far than the *Index Medicus*, but easier and quicker to use.

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Fundamentals of Monitoring Psychoactive Drug Therapy. By C. LINDSAY DEVANE. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins. 1990. 288 pp. £23.50.

The concept behind this book is excellent. It sets out to provide basic information on the clinical pharmacology of the drugs used in everyday psychiatric practice. This has become a much neglected area, often overshadowed by the more exciting, although unresolved, developments on mechanisms of action and neurochemical pathologies of psychiatric disorders.

The opening chapter provides a review of the history of psychotropic drugs followed by a rather brief section on neurotransmitter function. This is followed by excellent, concise sections on the basic principles of pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics. These provide adequate knowledge for the clinical psychiatrist and are readily understandable. The main omission is the lack of more than a passing mention of the 'first pass' effect. A final clinical section, intended for non-clinicians, is superfluous to psychiatrists.

The subsequent chapters review the drugs used for treatment of particular types of disorder: mood disorders, the psychoses, anxiety and insomnia, childhood mental disorders and substance abuse. Each chapter follows a standard pattern. An initial overview of treatment is followed by a detailed 'database' of 6-12 pages each on specific drugs used as examples within a particular class (e.g. for mood disorder, lithium, imipramine, phenelzine and trazodone are covered). This is then followed by a brief, largely tabular comparison of all drugs within particular classes. Finally, each chapter has a section of short paragraphs on essential data and differences relating to other commonly used drugs not mentioned in the detailed 'databases'. For example, amitriptyline, clomipramine, fluoxetine and others are included under the heading of 'cyclic antidepressants'. This overall format avoids duplication of information and provides a fairly readable book.

There are omissions, some of which probably reflect the book's American origin and therefore the fact that some drugs have only recently or not yet become

available there. More information on the newer 5-hydroxytryptamine (5-HT) specific drugs could be provided as well as on lofepramine. In addition, data on relative risk in overdose might be of value. In the "Psychoses" chapter sulpiride is not mentioned, nor is there a detailed 'database' for any depot preparation. In chapter four on "Anxiety and insomnia" propranolol and barbiturates should perhaps be awarded more space and in chapter six on "Substance abuse" the pharmacology of alcohol itself is not covered. Also missing is a chapter on epilepsy which would be of value to most psychiatrists.

Overall, then, a useful book for the shelf of the consultant and helpful for the trainee. While the subject matter may not be immediately attractive, it is important, and if the psychiatrist on the mental health team does not understand drug pharmacology, who is going to? This book provides a reasonably easy access to the necessary information. Unfortunately it is a little spoilt by some of the omissions, but aside from these it seems fairly complete.

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Clinical Pharmacology in Psychiatry from Molecular Studies to Clinical Reality. Edited by S. G. DHAL and L. F. GRAM. 1989. 330 pp. DM98.00.

This volume is a collection of papers presented at an international meeting held in Norway in 1988. As such the chapters are very heterogeneous. Although of a high quality, the immediate relevance to clinical psychiatry is not great. The subject matter ranges from the classification of receptors, through the genetics of drug metabolism, to drug level monitoring.

There is a useful chapter on drugs affecting D1 and D2 receptors; evidence is now emerging that D1 receptor blockade is important in the action of some drugs such as clozapine and the thioxanthenes.

A chapter on meta-analysis suggests that serotonin-specific reuptake blockers are less effective as antidepressants than some older tricyclics.

Several chapters are concerned with individual variations in drug metabolism. In particular, hydroxylation measured by debrisoquine metabolism is deficient in 5% to 10% of Caucasians; these individuals develop higher than expected blood levels of many tricyclic antidepressants and some phenothiazines, with consequent side-effects and intolerance. Some antipsychotic drugs and some antidepressants inhibit the hydroxylation enzymes, resulting in pharmacokinetic interactions between these drugs. Tissue from human liver banks can now be used to assess drug metabolism as part of the development of new drugs, without exposing living subjects to the drug; this is surely an important advance.

The book is recommended for psychiatrists wishing to know more about the metabolism of psychotropic drugs.

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Design and Analysis of Reliability Studies. The Statistical Evaluation of Measurement Errors. By G. DUNN. Oxford: Edward Arnold. 1989. 198 pp. £25.00.

This excellent book deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone concerned with the statistical problems of assessing the dependability or reliability of measurements. Starting from the assumption that the reader has a "level of statistical competence . . . covered by most elementary statistics courses", the book is neatly divided into three self-contained sections. In the first section, three chapters cover the basic types of mathematical measurement models (including binomial and Poisson processes as well as normal distributions), coefficients of agreement/disagreement and indices of reliability, consistency and stability. The second section is a single chapter on the often neglected topic of experimental designs for reliability studies (including consideration of sample size estimation). The final and longest section consists of three chapters on inferential methods used in the analysis of data from reliability studies; two chapters concentrate on methods appropriate for interval data while the third deals with categorical and ordinal measurements. Some essential mathematical concepts are described in detail in a series of appendices, and a list of major statistical computer packages which include the techniques dealt with in the book is also provided.

The techniques covered constitute a comprehensive guide to the statistical methods widely used in reliability studies. All of the methods are explained clearly, supplementing the rigorous mathematical descriptions supplied. The liberal use of worked examples clearly drawn from real clinical situations are particularly helpful. The mathematical notation used follows standard conventions and is consistent throughout the book.

The book contains one glaring omission. In their seminal paper, Bland & Altman (1985; *Lancet*, *i*, 307-308) argue forcibly that the assessment of reliability is not entirely a matter of statistical significance testing. Indeed, they show an example in which one of the statistical techniques advocated in this book leads to an erroneous conclusion. Bland & Altman advocate a confidence limit approach to reliability estimation, which essentially supplies an estimate of the probability that the difference between two supposedly identical measurements will lie within a clinically acceptable range. This approach usefully combines both statistical and clinical significance, but is totally ignored by Dunn.

There is also some doubt in my mind that the author has correctly identified his potential audience. A level of