

channel blockers and to one compound in particular. The workshop was sponsored by a drug company and I can only assume, perhaps incorrectly, that there is a connection here. The importance of this section of the book will depend on whether this group of drugs is shown in the long term to be of any value in the treatment of senile dementia.

The rest of the book is of more general interest and is quite readable. The initial chapters are concerned with epidemiology and with factors associated with dementia. Later chapters deal with differential diagnosis, psychological assessment of dementia, and clinical and diagnostic elements including a discussion of males and positron emission tomography scanning. There is a particularly interesting chapter on the treatment of depression in the elderly and, in general, the chapters on differential diagnosis were the most interesting.

Despite the limitations of the book mentioned earlier, this would be a worthwhile addition to a hospital library.

TONY ROBERTS, *Senior Registrar in Psychiatry, Bangor*

Alzheimer's Disease. Treatment and Long-Term Management. Edited by JEFFREY L. CUMMINGS and BRUCE L. MILLER. USA: Marcel Dekker. 1990. 416 pp. \$125.00 (USA and Canada), \$150.00 (all other countries).

Increasing concern for the biomedical importance and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease (AD) is leading to an abundance of publications on this subject. This latest offering comes from California, and contains 25 papers contributed by 34 authors, 31 from North America and three from Europe. A range of topics is covered, grouped under five headings: "Introduction" (a single paper on clinical diagnosis); "Disease specific therapies"; "Treatment of behavioural symptoms"; "Long-term care"; and finally "Future treatment directions".

While the price causes a sharp intake of breath, what is most impressive about the content is the appropriateness of the mix and the consistently high quality. All contributions are carefully researched, coherently presented, and well referenced. Predictably, familiar territory is covered: clinical diagnosis; incontinence; recognition and management of superimposed medical conditions; neuroleptics; antidepressants; cholinomimetics; and the ergoloid mesylates. However, the fact that stories can improve with re-telling is supported by these papers, and Ouslander's offering on incontinence is the best I have yet read.

Two other papers in the long-term care section are also exceptional: Morishita on wandering behaviour and McEvoy on behavioural treatment. By contrast, the paper on rehabilitation is disappointing and contains no reference to cognitive rehabilitation (reality orientation and reminiscence). In the USA, AD represents a finan-

cial catastrophe for most affected families (Read on community resources), while locally available and comprehensive assessment, treatment, rehabilitation and care programmes, rapidly becoming commonplace across the UK, are seldom to be found. However, Congress is already putting millions of dollars into AD research (67 million in 1987 alone) and may well heed the pleas of senior citizens and promote sounder and more affordable care systems as proposed by Jazwiecki in a chapter on future treatment directions. The spin off from already funded biomedical research is to be found in chapters on cholinergic enhancement strategies, genetic engineering, neuropeptides, amyloid angiopathy, and intra-cerebral grafting and neurotrophic factors: all superbly presented and, thankfully, understandable.

Overall, this is a very impressive book which should be read by clinicians working in multidisciplinary geriatric psychiatry teams, and by those who would like to research some aspect of dementia but don't know how to start – they will find plenty of suggestions.

In summary, the book is expensive, but the best usually is!

GARRY BLESSED, *Emeritus Consultant Psychiatrist, MRC Chemical Neuropathology Unit, Newcastle General Hospital, Newcastle Upon Tyne*

Depressive Disorders and Immunity (Progress in Psychiatry Series). Edited by ANDREW H. MILLER. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1989. 189 pp. £17.50.

This book records the substance of a symposium organised by the American Psychiatric Association in 1986, although the format and references reveal that the papers have been substantially updated. Unlike many published proceedings of meetings, the publication of this monograph is fully justified. Firstly, its subject is essentially multidisciplinary and thus it was worthwhile encapsulating the views of the psychiatrists, immunologists and neurobiologists. Secondly, the interactions between stress, the immune system and psychiatric disorders have been the stuff of considerable mythology and dubious clinical applications, so an authoritative review was certainly timely.

The book contains eight contributions on the theme of depressive disorders and immunity. Fortunately, the editor is a polymath who, by appearing as an author on half of these contributions, has ensured continuity of style and an absence of repetition. Above all, the book is free of excessive jargon, and the technical terms peculiar to each discipline are properly explained. This is an indispensable virtue in a book designed mainly to introduce psychiatrists to concepts drawn from unfamiliar fields. In principle, these chapters deal with the physiological basis of interactions between the immune and nervous systems and with the clinical observations