

makes enormous demands on the time and resources of the therapist. And, furthermore, all studies to date have indicated that psychiatric treatment of sociopathic suicide attempters is largely unsuccessful. In the long run, primary prevention can be cheaper, and most probably more effective.

C. R. BAGLEY.

INFANTILE AUTISM

Infantile Autism: Concepts, Characteristics and Treatments. Edited by MICHAEL RUTTER. Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. 1972. Pp. 327. Price £3.50.

Is autism the result of organic defect in the brain systems relating to language and learning, and if so which particular systems? Can it ever occur without organic brain disease, and indeed is autism really a diagnosis at all or merely a description of a heterogeneous group of children? Why does it seem to affect a disproportionate number of children of professional and intellectually well endowed families? These and many other questions are raised in this excellent symposium, and although no dogmatic answers are offered, this compendium of expertise about infantile autism must be the most comprehensive starting point that any research worker in the next few years could wish for. Clearly we are at the stage of conceptualization, but there is no excuse for failure to grasp the main issues in this process after reading the contributions of Koupornik, Ornitz and Rutter.

The section in which treatment is appraised provides models not only for the treatment of autism but for behaviour disorders in children in general. Because of the way the symposium was compiled there is a good deal of repetition and cross reference, but I found it interesting and instructive to read the different emphasis and interpretations that various authors placed on each other's research.

This is undoubtedly not a handbook of autism for the uninitiated, but should be on the shelf of every professional worker treating autism or researching into childhood behaviour problems. Although I said no questions seem to be answered, in fact this work does seem to have finally disposed of the idea of the schizophrenogenic parents.

CHRISTOPHER WARDLE.

NEUROSCIENCES

An Introduction to the Neurosciences. By BRIAN A. CURTIS, STANLEY JACOBSON and ELLIOT MARCUS. London: W. B. Saunders. 1972. Pp. 878. Price £8.40.

The three authors of this book state that it is designed to provide a single integrated text for medical school courses in the neurosciences. This aim has been achieved in a wieldy volume, admirable for the clarity of text, generously supplemented by excellent diagrams and photographic illustrations. Integration is achieved by introducing some relevant clinical data in the early chapters which deal primarily with basic anatomy, embryology and cytology, and which include illustrations of light and electron-micrographs.

The clinical aspects are expanded in chapters in which clinical cases illustrate anatomical and functional aspects of the various systems. The chapters on the anatomy and clinical aspects of the spinal cord, brain stem and cerebral hemispheres are supplemented by problem solving exercises derived from actual case records. An answer sheet is available on request. Similar exercises in problems of cell and nerve physiology are provided. A film strip of sixty-two frames supplementing the course and a viewer are also available from the publisher. The prices of these supplementary aids are not stated.

Chapter 11 is entitled 'Microscopic Anatomy of the Brainstem', but deals in fact with the gross topographical anatomy of tracts and cranial nerve nuclei in the form of a series of transverse myelin-stained sections and appropriate diagrams and text. Basic neuropathology is covered briefly in the chapters on the clinical considerations of the cerebral hemispheres. The microphotographs in this section are disappointing, both scant and poorly reproduced. For quick reference the final chapter consists of a short descriptive atlas of the brain and cord.

This book, being comprehensive and providing an integrated approach, is recommended for post-graduate students of clinical neurology, psychiatry and neurosurgery, as well as for the undergraduate courses for which it is designed.

PAULINE KAHN.

Evoked Brain Potentials in Psychiatry. By CHARLES SHAGASS. New York-London: Plenum Press. 1972. Pp. 274. Price \$18.00.

This book provides an extensive and up-to-date review of studies relating to the EEG changes which occur in response to visual, auditory and somatosensory stimuli, an area of neurophysiological investigation to which the author has made outstanding contributions for more than a decade.

Detailed attention is given to methodological problems, including instrumentation, stimulating procedure, data analysis and management of artefacts. The type of evoked potentials are described,