

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