

chapters contain definition and neuropathological descriptions. Some of the slide reprints do not, I feel, do justice to the quality of the original material, but the text is very comprehensive and descriptive, and the chapter on morphological changes in dementia in old age (B. E. Thomson) is particularly good.

There is an excellent chapter on vascular disease and dementia in the elderly, and this, in combination with preceding chapters clearly demonstrates that the diagnosis of 'arteriosclerotic dementia' is made more often than pathological change will justify. There is a very interesting chapter on Transmissible Virus Dementia describing careful research by the authors, and the latter chapters of the book are devoted in the main to describing cognitive and intellectual change. Psychological testing is described and its scope and value discussed in realistic terms. The social management of dementia is not covered in the book.

This compilation is a comprehensive, interesting, mainly organic study which would be of great value to anyone interested in the neuropathological aspects of ageing. The references at the end of each chapter are very comprehensive. At £11.25 it is a little expensive for personal purchase, but it certainly deserves a place in the hospital library.

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#### **Biological Bases of Psychiatric Disorders.**

Edited by ALAN FRAZER and ANDREW WINOKUR.  
London: SP Medical and Scientific Books. 1977.  
Pp 262. £11.25.

This multi-authored book presents a simple outline summary of a number of important topics relevant to psychiatry, suitable for medical students and students from other disciplines entering the field. The style is simple, the presentation clear, the figures adequate. The first section presents a very brief account of basic brain anatomy, neurophysiology and neurochemistry of monoamine neurons. Then attention is paid to how different disciplines are useful in understanding psychiatric syndromes—neuroendocrinology, genetic studies, sleep, primate modelling of human psychopathology, and the neuropsychiatric means of studying a particular brain lesion. Each section is only ten pages long; yet a large number of the essential points are covered adequately.

In Chapter 9 we reach a more detailed account of the psychotropic drugs, which I was glad to see included the remarkable series of hypotheses and experiments that Dr Cade followed to discover the anti-manic effects of lithium—surely a medical discovery on a par with the discovery of penicillin.

Chapters 11–14 cover the clinical biology of schizophrenia, mania and depression. One peculiarity in the essay by Lipinski and Matthyse on 'Biochemical Theories of Schizophrenia' is the ascription of the transmethylation hypothesis to only one of the three authors in fact jointly responsible. Furthermore, in discussing the alleged lowering of platelet monoamine oxidase in schizophrenia only positive reports are quoted, and none of the negative ones. One last criticism: Research into schizophrenia is still presented in this book largely as the search for a unitary lesion instead of a search for a possible number of different lesions in what is really a group of schizophrenias with probably widely differing biochemical bases. This has been the cause for immense confusion in the past and the basis for a large amount of poorly designed research in which some biological measurement was made or reaction tested in  $x$  'schizophrenics' and  $y$  normal controls and the results expressed in terms of the statistical differences between the groups. Yet we are accumulating increasing evidence of the heterogeneity of schizophrenia. For example, 40 per cent of chronic schizophrenics respond to methionine with an acute psychosis, whereas 60 per cent show no such response. Van Kammen has shown that some schizophrenics get worse on amphetamine whereas others show an improvement. There are numerous other examples. Therefore, the only solution is detailed longitudinal studies of sub-groups identified by some biological marker, and in particular, the search for cross-correlations between different such sub-groups. The last two chapters cover the topical subjects of opiate and alcohol dependence.

The book offers a useful, straightforward, if necessarily oversimplified, introduction to a most complex and rapidly developing field.

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**Primer of Lithium Therapy.** By JAMES W. JEFFERSON and JOHN H. GREIST. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins. 1977. Pp 211. \$10.50.

This relatively inexpensive, compact yet comprehensive survey of the present state of knowledge of lithium therapy cannot be too highly recommended: a copy should be available in every psychiatric unit, in every lithium clinic and in every setting in which lithium is prescribed; it is a must for practising psychiatrists and could be read with advantage by family doctors, physicians, medical students and psychiatric nurses. The book, despite an unusual format—its text, printed with crystalline clarity, was developed from a lithium consultation computer