

BOOK REVIEWS

Diseases of the Knee Joint

I S Smillie. (Pp 459; £16.) Churchill Livingstone. 1974.

Professor Smillie's new book maintains the high standard of his earlier book on injuries to the knee joint. It covers the important subjects in depth but the less common problems are examined with the brevity they deserve. The tenor of the book reflects the author's vast experience in and understanding of the joint. This is most particularly the case in the chapter on loose bodies in the knee joint, which deals with osteochondritis dissecans, for whose surgical management the author enjoys a worldwide reputation.

This is a book for the orthopaedic specialist. No undergraduate or postgraduate studying surgery in general would ever be required to study this joint in so much depth. It makes a useful reference book for these students, and the first chapter on examination and investigation must be recommended for their attention. The author frequently uses case histories to illustrate the points he is making. This is one of the most interesting features and does much to crystallise problems and maintain the reader's concentration. It is also gratifying to see that the most experienced surgeons have their problems and their failures. The author's cautious attitude to the newer procedures of arthroscopy and total joint replacement is also refreshing, especially to those surgeons experiencing difficulties with these techniques.

The main disadvantage of this book is its price. £16 is a great deal to pay in this age of inflation and this will no doubt limit its sales. Unfortunately some of the illustrations are not particularly clear, and this proves a minor inconvenience. In places the author uses repetitive and colloquial English which proves irritating, but these last two are only minor criticisms of an otherwise excellent book.

C D R LIGHTOWLER

Sleep, Nutrition, and Mood

A H Crisp and E Stonehill. (Pp 173; £6.95.) John Wiley. 1976.

Simple organisms occupy their lives in three harmonious ways—acquiring food, resting, and reproducing. It should therefore not surprise us if these activities were to continue inextricably woven together in higher animals which are also possessed of emotions or moods. Not quite inextricably, however, thanks to the techniques and research the authors of this book describe.

As they remark, drowsiness and sleep often follow a meal. As psychiatrists, they see patients who describe changes in sleep, weight, and appetite during illness. Professor Crisp has also treated many with anorexia nervosa and has measured their improvement in sleep as weight increases. Conversely, the authors describe how, when obese people diet

and their weight falls, they sleep less and sometimes become depressed. Both the anorexic and the excessively fat patient tend to have impaired sexuality. Feeding, sleeping, emotions, and sexuality are thus indeed bound together.

The first half of the book summarises knowledge of and techniques for measurement of sleep, mood, and nutritional state. There are gaps in the survey, such as recent work on the Pickwickian syndrome, and, though the authors kindly quote old work of mine on sleep in depression there are better, modern studies by others. Finally, they bring together and describe much of the research they have published in journals. They conclude that, while disorder of mood is indeed associated with broken sleep, independently of this there are changes in sleep that are secondary to changes in nutrition. Weight loss is associated with broken and shorter sleep, weight gain with less broken and longer sleep.

The book presents in a convenient form research and ideas that will interest those who treat obesity, those who treat the sad or anxious, and those of the rest of us who occasionally find time to sleep.

IAN OSWALD

Cellular Mechanisms Modulating Gonadal Hormone Action: Advances in Sex Hormone Research

Ed Radhey L Singhal and John A Thomas. Vol 2. (Pp 472; £17.50.) HM & M Publishers. 1976.

The title of this book is a microcosm of the advertising way of life. It is prepackaged, bland, and slips down smoothly without any hard meanings to stick in the gullet. Nor are you much wiser after having read the book, for it is very difficult to discern a common thread in its 10 topics. There is something in it for everybody—pharmacologists, physiologists, endocrinologists, cancer researchers. But the reviews are all at the research level and make no concessions to any lack of specialised knowledge. Although it has a scholarly review by a well-known British research worker, the book is geared to American needs in both matter and language, its readership in Britain will be small, and sales will probably be largely restricted to medical libraries. Even so not many of them will be happy to pay so much over the average price.

The book has been produced by the slightly improbable combination of teachers in the Universities of Ottawa and West Virginia, and 10 of the 18 authors hail from those parts. The editors are both pharmacologists, and the team they have assembled reflects their interests and contacts in this field. The book is at its best when the writing is concerned with the interface between pharmacology and endocrinology, as in the chapter on the control of prolactin secretion by the catecholamines contributed by R MacLeod and I Login.

Endocrinologists like Wilfred Butt or Brig Saxena are always able to write with authority about their work on gonadotrophins, but neither has much to add to what has already appeared over their names in the endocrine literature.

Two editorial shortcomings deserve to be checked lest they become customary in the rest of the series. The index is a page and a half and barely expands the contents list. Occasional references are given as "In press." What a man might be going to say is seldom evidence and if the reference does not even say where it is likely to appear the reader can never judge how much fact there may be behind the opinion.

ARNOLD KLOPPER

The Autistic Syndromes

Ed Mary Coleman. (Pp 334; \$33.50.) North-Holland Publishing. 1976.

Containing much fascinating material, this book on autism is in part a review of the subject. The editor, who is director of the Children's Brain Research Clinic, Washington, obviously has an extensive knowledge of the problem. She is the first to point out the great difficulties in defining autism and the lack of definite agreement between accepted authorities. There are some 21 contributors to the 18 chapters in the book. A number are from Washington and other centres in the USA, but the team includes two workers from Oxford and one from Dundee.

The book is essentially the presentation of 79 children with "the classic autistic syndrome." They were selected from 101 whom the National Society for Autistic Children had arranged to participate. The clinical and test results on this group of children are included in an appendix. The classic autistic syndrome is defined in this text as of early onset, no observable signs of neurological or electroencephalographic impairment, and a clinical course that can begin improving between 5 and 7 years of age. Those who "develop seizures before adolescence" are not considered to fall into this class. But only 49 of the total sample are labelled as purely autistic. Five are said to have "brain injury," three are classed as psychotic as well as being autistic, one is said to be epileptic, and one is described as having a "chronic brain syndrome." All of this is a little confusing since the editor has two other categories of autism from which cases were supposedly not chosen for this study. These are the childhood schizophrenic syndrome with autistic-type symptoms, and the neurologically impaired autistic syndrome.

The study cases were matched by controls by arrangement with the Washington branch of the National Society. The editor points out the difficulties of a retrospective survey for evidence as to aetiology. In the title she uses the term "autistic syndromes" to imply that autism may have different causes. The sample