BOOK REVIEWS

ENZYMES IN ANESTHESIOLOGY. F.F. FOLDES, Editor. New York, Springer-Verlag, 1978.

BESIDES PROVIDING a review of enzyme structures, kinetics and classification, this book manages to relate succinctly the functions of the various enzymes to practical applications in daily anaesthetic practice. The enzymes described are those of the cholinergic, adrenergic and cyclic AMP systems, the hepatic microsomal enzymes, and creatine phosphokinase. All of the discussions are backed by extensive references. The book is quite readable and is recommended reading for any anaesthetist.

John Brebner

THE ENDORPHINS (Advances in Biochemical Psychopharmacology, Volume 18). E. COSTA and M. TRABUCCHI, Editors. New York, Raven Press, 1978. 396 pages. Price \$28.00.

THIS WORTHWHILE reference text incorporates a lot of research articles dealing with the nature of the endorphins, of their receptors and their localization. Most of the work is based on animal research and radioimmunoassay techniques, but a few parts are dedicated to the beginnings of research in humans. The interactions of endorphins, opioids, naloxone and acupuncture are also discussed. Hypotheses about the possible role of endorphins in psychological behaviour and in psychotic states are advanced and new areas of research are suggested. The book starts off with an excellent review of the history of neuropeptide research. Enkephalinergic systems are compared with other neuronal systems. This book is not to be considered as light reading but might prove to be essential for those working in the field of pain research.

John Brebner

CLINICAL ANAESTHESIA AND INTENSIVE THERAPY. Vol. 17: ROHYPNOL (Flunitrazepam). Pharmacological Basis and Clinical Application. Editors: AHNEFELD, F.W., BERGMANN, H., BURRI, C., DICK, W., HALMAGYI, M., HOSSLT, G., RUGHEIMER, E. 1978. Figs. 93, Tabs. 35, XI, 217 pages. Soft Cover DM

36. -; US \$18.00. Berlin-Heidelberg-New York: Springer-Verlag. ISBN 3-540-08900-4.

FLUNITRAZEPAM, the latest member of the family of benzodiazepines, is not commercially available in Canada, and therefore its properties are not widely known. In Europe, on the contrary, it has been on the market in several countries for a number of years, and appears to be a sufficiently promising agent to have warranted a symposium which is reported in this volume. It has been used for induction of anaesthesia, as a supplement during maintenance, or to provide sedation during regional procedures. One of its intriguing properties is said to be its ability to prolong the action of narcotics or sedatives for some eight hours, a property which in the proper circumstances could be quite desirable. At the same time flunitrazepam itself is reputed to have little major deleterious effects on the various body systems.

Reporting on such an interesting substance, it is the more regrettable that no English summaries are provided, thus restricting severely the readership of a very worthwhile publication.

Gordon M. Wyant

ANAESTHESIOLOGY AND INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE. Volume 110: Re-Examination of Gamma-Hydroxybutyric Acid. Edited by Prof. R. FREY. 1978. 63 Figures, 34 Tables XIII, 149 Pages (79 in English). Soft Cover: DM 38. -; US \$19.00. Berlin-Heidelberg-New York; Springer-Verlag. ISBN 3-540-08724-9.

TRUE TO ITS TITLE this collection of 12 papers, based on a symposium held in March 1977, re-examines the potential of gamma-hydroxybutyric acid as an intravenous anaesthetic. The sodium salt of this substance was first introduced into anaesthetic practice by Laborit in 1960 and publicized in the U.S.A. by Blumenfeld, Suntay and Harmel two years later, but for a variety of reasons did not gain wide acceptance. Investigations have however continued in Europe and the results of these are reported in this volume. Briefly, they suggest that as a naturally occurring metabolite, the substance exerts only minimal

side-effects and might be of particular use, either by itself or in combination with other agents, in emergency situations and for relatively safe anaesthesia in developing countries, where more sophisticated anaesthesia may not be available or may not be practicable. This book is well worth reading, even if one does not share the enthusiasm of its editor, if for no other reason than to be cognizant of anaesthetic practices and interests in other parts of the world. It is a welcome feature of the book therefore, that more than half of the text is in English.

Gordon M. Wyant

ANAESTHESIOLOGY AND INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE. Volume 112: HALDEMANN, G. Problems of Circulation and Anaesthesia in Geriatric Patients. 1978. 24 Figures, 3 Tables, VIII, 55 Pages (2 in English). Soft Cover: DM 28.00; US \$14.00. Berlin-Heidelberg-New York: Springer-Verlag. ISBN 3-540-08785-0.

THIS SHORT MONOGRAPH mirrors the current interest in geriatric medicine and applies it to anaesthesia. It is the report of a study of halothane, enflurane, neurolept-analgesia, and fentanyl with "Rohypnol" which is the benzodiazepine flunitrazepam. One doubts whether the results of a research project warrant publication in book form when there are specialty journals in which such work can and should be re-

ported, and may indeed enjoy a larger circle of readers who moreover would not be obliged to pay for the privilege. The text of 41 pages is followed by summaries in German and English and a bibliography of 97 titles.

Gordon M. Wyant

THORACIC INJURIES: DIAGNOSIS, EVALUATION AND TREATMENT. GLINZ, W. 1978, 133 Figs., 31 Tables, IX 294 Pages. Soft Cover. DM 98.- US \$49.00. Berlin-Heidelberg-New York; Springer-Verlag. ISBN 3-540-08597-1.

THIS BOOK, written by a surgeon, is directed primarily towards the needs of general and accident surgeons. It does not deal directly with anaesthetic problems, but is of interest to anaesthetists in that it gives a comprehensive overview of situations with which those who are working in Intensive Care Units are frequently confronted. None of the conditions described are treated in great depth and the 21 pages of text on Respiratory Insufficiency (total 28 pages) are hardly likely to excite an informed reader. Nevertheless, this book can be of use to those who want to learn about a field which is becoming increasingly important, provided they are conversant with the German language. There are no summaries in English.

Gordon M. Wyant