countries, especially in those of the Eastern bloc. Another striking statistic is that the Republic of Korea has jumped from bottom of the 30 countries whose spirit consumption was recorded in 1960 to the clear leader in just 20 years.

The report is strong on statistics (there are 30 tables) but weak – perhaps inevitably so – on recommendations. It is fine to talk about more research, better data and more reliable indicators of production, consumption and alcohol-related problems; it is splendid to try and raise the public awareness of governments, general public and the scientific community. But there comes a time when words must give way to action, and it is later than most of us think.

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Recent Advances in Epilepsy, No. 2, edited by Timothy A. Pedley and Brian S. Meldrum. Pp. ix + 344, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £30.00.

There is a boom in epilepsy and books on epilepsy are a growth industry. Genuine advances in the understanding of the natural history of epilepsy, scientific assessment of the role of drug therapy, the increasing sophistication of biochemical and neuro-physiological techniques, and the exciting advances in our understanding of central nervous system transmission justify books of this title. The editors are to be congratulated. This is the second of a series of three, which they hope will 'form a cumulative textbook providing a comprehensive review of thought and practice in the field of epilepsy'. They are succeeding. The first two chapters are excellent reviews of the physiology and biochemistry of experimental seizure activity, and the remaining eleven chapters are all clinically orientated. They include the application of the contributions of modern imaging techniques. Reynolds gives a very succinct account of the effects of treatment on the prognosis of epilepsy, an understanding of great importance which is largely due to his own work. David Chadwick tackles a very difficult and hitherto almost completely ignored problem, that of when to discontinue anti-epileptic treatment. Dr Simon's review of the management of status epilepticus sadly reflects the availability of drugs in the United States, and ignores drugs that we would use such as chlormethiazole and clonazepam. It is nonetheless a clear guide on therapy, and an excellent review of the literature. Further chapters on the obtunding effects of anti-epileptic drugs, the monitoring of these drugs, the surgery of epilepsy, neo-natal seizures, psychogenic seizures, reflex epilepsy and a review of the benzo-diazepines complete a thoroughly worthwhile book. It is recommended to all interested in epilepsy, and, even more so, to that proportion of neurologists (rapidly dwindling) who are not.

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Textbook of Anaesthesia, edited by G. Smith and A.R. Aitkenhead. Pp. vi + 586, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £19.50.

This volume is a new addition to the ranks of the comprehensive textbooks of anaesthesia. It is a multi-author production, with the majority of the 42 contributors emanating from the editors' school at Leicester. However, there is also a significant output from other centres in the UK and chapters from the USA and Sweden.

The book covers the basic sciences, emphasising those aspects which are of special relevance to the anaesthetist and this section is notable for the very comprehensive chapter on physiology of the nervous system by Dr Sheila Willatts. Pharmacology is extensively reviewed in eight separate chapters, although some of the newer agents, such as isoflurane and 'Diprivan', perforce receive scant coverage. The contributions describing the overall conduct of anaesthetic practice by both local and general techniques are supplemented by chapters on equipment and monitoring and on anaesthesia for each surgical speciality. The general principles of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, intensive therapy and the relief of chronic and post-operative pain are included, together with a useful series of appendices containing helpful data.

The material presented is, by and large, up to date and will be eminently suitable for those in the early stages of their anaesthetic career, who wish to have an overview of the specialty contained in a single volume without excessive detail of any particular aspect. No references are given, but suggestions for further reading are listed at the end of each chapter.

Although a list of contributors is produced at the beginning of the book, the author's name does not appear in association with each chapter heading in the text, and I found this rather annoying during the review and hope it could be rectified during a reprint stage.

The book is bound in a soft-back cover, which I fear may deteriorate with its use as a bench book by many different individuals in a busy department. However, the text is clearly set out with helpful headings and titles and excellent line diagrams. There are also many photographic illustrations of equipment which will inevitably look dated, even in the near future, with the technology moving forward at such a rapid pace (the Dinamap automatic blood pressure device illustrated is already an obsolete model).

Professor Smith and Dr Aitkenhead are to be congratulated on soliciting and moulding together such excellent contributions. I have little doubt that this book will be a success and at the relatively modest price of £19.50, it is likely to be bought by individuals, as well as libraries.

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