The Psychopharmacology and Treatment of Schizophrenia, edited by P.B. Bradley and S.R. Hirsch. British Association for Psychopharmacology Monograph No. 8. Pp. vii + 457, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1986. £37.50.

The neuroleptic era was born in France in the 1950s with the serendipitous discovery that chlorpromazine had a profoundly beneficial effect on hallucinations without producing undue sedation. The news of this discovery travelled rapidly leading to the use of a family of drugs which have been variously termed neuroleptics, anti-psychotics, and major tranquillisers. The introduction of these drugs, all of which share a common property of reducing dopamine transmission, coincided with a marked reduction in long stay psychiatric beds in the developed countries, all the more impressive because of the previous insidious increase.

The types of agents which are now in use have a variety of chemical structures and there has been an increasing preoccupation with the immediate and long term side effects. The discovery of endogenous opioid-like substances which act as modulators of the classic neurotransmitters, and of various polypeptides involved in neurotransmission, has broadened the field of treatment. Claims have been made for a variety of agents affecting various other neurotransmitter systems including the adrenergic, gabaergic, and most recently and excitingly, the serotonergic systems.

It is of constant interest to clinicians to be kept abreast of pharmacological treatments in schizophrenia, a condition with indistinct clinical boundaries which has common features with a variety of conditions such as borderline personality, schizotypal personality, cycloid psychosis, schizo-affective, schizophreniform and schizophrenia-like disorders, and bouffée délirante. Claims have been made for the beneficial effect of dopamine reducing agents in these disorders, which are often genetically related to schizophrenia, and are grouped together as schizophrenic spectrum disorders, together with claims for benefit in episodic dyscontrol.

Within the central band of disorders which can be described as nuclear schizophrenia, the role of dopamine blocking agents for the treatment of acute episodes and prophylaxis has been well established, with an important interaction with the family and social networks, and the social and environmental factors which are likely to influence the outcome of pharmacological treatments are well discussed in this book.

It remains something of a mystery why there are idiosyncratic differences between drugs with similar profiles, but it is indeed the case that some patients respond to one drug and not another. Most research is guided by group differences and these individual variations may contain important clues to therapeutic issues. The possibilities of the new imaging techniques, including NMR and PET, opens new vistas on this type of problem, and one may hope for an accelerated rate of advance.

It is impossible to test the effectiveness of anti-psychotic agents without adequate rating instruments, and this topic is well covered, together with the methodology of drug trials. The book tries to avoid duplication by careful titling of the chapters and is largely successful in this. As with all books of this nature, it is out of date before it goes to press, and the exciting role of serotonin manipulation gets little mention.

The brief table of interactions could have been usefully expanded. The chapter on clinical treatment by one of the editors, Hirsch, is an elegant survey by an active researcher in the field.

The book is interesting throughout and really useful in many places, and is recommended.

Malcolm P.I. Weller,
*Friern Hospital,
London N11 3BP*

Recent Advances in Orthopaedics. No. 5, edited by A. Catterall. Pp. v + 204, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1987. £30.00.

Most reviewers regard their craft as a mixed blessing. Many books are mediocre, a few are terrible, and it seems that even fewer are excellent. *Recent Advances in Orthopaedics* is one in the last class. How quickly are previous weeks of drudgery forgotten when a good book is sent to be reviewed. It was a pleasure to read. The subjects were stimulating, and the contributors renowned for their ability to make a point, however controversial, with clarity and authority.

The most difficult task must have been to decide what to include and what to omit. The Editor alludes to this in the Preface. The reader might complain that his favourite topic was not included, but he would have to admit that the subjects cover a wide range, and represent a good cross-section of orthopaedic interest. The Editor must be congratulated on this.

A similar problem faced the reviewer choosing the most interesting chapters. If all Orthopaedic Departments were rid of the problem backs, outpatients would be much less of an ordeal. Unhappily Getty's chapter gives no easy answers, but it will be read by all in their search for El Dorado. The management of slipped upper femoral epiphysis is still a problem, but Colton gives a clear description of modern and safe management of this condition. Freeman reassures us the cementless fixation of prosthesis is desirable but not essential, to the relief of all cement users.

Perhaps of all the chapters that on anterior shoulder pain proved the most interesting. As the author, I. Bazley, wrote it is the forgotten joint. No surgeon would examine the knee or hip in the same cavalier way as is accorded the shoulder. Perhaps now such disrespect will not be shown this important joint.

It is invidious to select some chapters from this excellent book for comment. All are good, and it is space rather than quality which caused their omission. The Editor and the authors must be congratulated on producing this book which must be compulsive reading for all orthopaedic surgeons, established or embryo. It is well worth the £30 it costs.

C.D.R. Lightowler,
*Hartwood Hospital,
Brentwood, CM13 3HR
Essex.*