amnestic effects of cycloheximide only occur in learning tasks involving stressful stimuli such as footshock). One of the best chapters in the book deals with neurotransmitter regulation of pituitary secretion. Over the last decade, considerable interest has arisen in the behavioral effects of pituitary and hypothalamic hormones such as vasopressin and ACTH. Much current research, pioneered largely by David de Wied, is directed toward studying the effects of these hormones on motivation, memory, and learning. Readers interested in obtaining a better understanding of the physiology and biochemistry of the pituitary system will find the chapter by Rose and Ganong very useful.

The chapters on clinical psychopharmacology are somewhat uneven. The chapter on suicide prevention is largely a prescription for the use of drugs in depressed and suicidal states. It contains mostly clinical intuitions with little emphasis on established research findings. The contribution by Berger on aminergic factors in mental illness is a review paper. It contains a detailed summary of current knowledge of the neurochemistry of norepinephrine, dopamine, and serotonin, and a good discussion of the possible role of disturbances in biogenic amine metabolism in schizophrenia and the affective disorders. No new material is contained in this chapter but old data and theories are clearly presented. The contribution by Giguere describes in detail the neurophysiological, pharmacological, and behavioral characteristics of piracetam, a new compound structurally related to Gaba. This compound is inactive in almost all of the standard pharmacological tests and shows no toxicity. Its most interesting behavioral characteristic is that it is capable of attenuating memory impairment induced by several amnestic agents. This compound may therefore be of value in ameliorating certain behavioral defects in humans resulting from senescence and neurological dysfunction.

Overall, this is a well-organized, interesting, and useful book that accurately reflects the diversity and vitality of contemporary psychopharmacology.

Close Encounters of the Dorm Kind

Andrew Baum and Stuart Valins


Reviewed by Paul B. Paulus

Andrew Baum is Assistant Professor of Psychology at Trinity College (Hartford, Conn.), on leave as Assistant Professor of Medical Psychology at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md. He earned his PhD from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Baum is co-editor of Human Response to Crowding (with Y. Epstein). Stuart Valins is Professor of Psychology at SUNY Stony Brook. A Columbia University PhD, he was previously on the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Valins wrote chapters in Attribution: Perceiving the Causes of Behavior (edited by E. E. Jones et al.). Baum and Valins are co-editors of the Advances in Environmental Psychology series (with J. E. Singer).

Paul B. Paulus is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Texas at Arlington. He previously taught at the University of Iowa, where he earned his PhD. Paulus is editor of the forthcoming Psychology of Group Influence.

One interesting new development in psychology has been the appearance of the discipline of environmental psychology. Many psychologists in this area are dedicating their efforts to increasing our understanding of the nature of the people environment fit or misfit. One of their major concerns has been with the potential negative effects of crowding. The Baum and Valins book represents the fruit of a detailed study of crowding in college dormitories. The authors were primarily concerned with the effects of living in corridor dormitories with double-occupancy rooms and common bath and lounge areas in comparison to living in dormitories that consist of six-person suites with three bedrooms and a self-contained lounge and bathroom. Their studies indicate that students in the double-occupancy dormitories respond negatively to their living environment and exhibit social avoidance and withdrawal. Suite dormitory residents seem to be satisfied and positively disposed to social interaction. Similar results were obtained in comparing residents of long corridor dormitories with those in short corridor dormitories, with long corridor residents reacting negatively and showing social withdrawal.

In additional studies, it was found that corridor residents exhibit social withdrawal and avoidance when waiting with others outside of the dormitory (such as in a dentist's office), and prefer to be ignored in group discussions. In contrast, suite residents are comforted by the presence of others in aversive waiting situations, and appear to be stressed when ignored during group discussion. While corridor residents try to cope with their environment by social avoidance, this coping behavior is apparently not effective in reducing the social stress experienced in the dormitory and extra-dormitory environments. However, corridor residents are able to maintain meaningful relationships outside of the dormitory, and once they move to suite-type housing, the effects of having lived in corridor dormitories seem to dissipate.

Partially on the basis of detailed questioning of dormitory residents, the authors propose that the corridor residents are experiencing social stress because of the high number of uncontrolled and
unwanted interactions to which they are exposed in the common living areas. In contrast, suite residents have a relatively small number of people with whom to share common areas and can develop effective means of regulating interaction in this small group. The development of definite social groups within the suites also supposedly adds to the sense of control of the suite residents.

Yet what are the implications of this research for other environments? Will we exhibit reactions similar to that of the corridor residents in environments such as large apartment complexes and densely populated neighborhoods? How can one determine whether an environment involves too frequent uncontrolled and unwanted interactions? In fact, if I were not aware of Baum and Valins's work, I would make predictions exactly opposite to those made in the book. In the suites, one is confined with six people in a limited space and one has to coordinate one's activities with them, whereas in the corridor dormitories one has to coordinate with only one other person in one's primary living environment. While Baum and Valins argue that suite residents are able to develop satisfactory ways of relating with their suitemates, form protective social groups within the suite, and do not have to contend as much with unknown and unfamiliar others, their theorizing has somewhat of a post-hoc flavor. It certainly appears difficult to determine at what point the "internal social density" becomes more of a problem than the "external social density."

I was also struck by the rather grim picture of human interaction drawn by the authors and others in the crowding field. The general gist of the research seems to be. we don't like to be bothered by casual interaction with strangers, even in such supposedly benign environments as college dormitories. It is hard to argue against this conclusion given the large amount of convincing evidence available. One could even argue, that a "fear of, or an avoidance tendency toward, strangers simply represents a mechanism the human species has evolved to maximize survival. Certainly in many of today's cities, this mechanism may in fact be required for survival. Yet, in environments where others represent no serious danger, is such social reticence either inevitable or adaptable? What about mixed-sex dormitories? Does this type of social apprehension occur in other cultures as well, or is it limited to competitive western societies? In fact, Baum and Valins's research suggests that residents of suite dormitories develop social cohesiveness and social skills that make them quite comfortable with casual social encounters at low-density levels. Whether these people would be better able to tolerate high levels of unwanted and controlled interaction outside of their dormitory environment remains to be seen. Future research should determine the generalizability of the ideas promoted in the book and suggest some guidelines for their application to other environments.

While I have some qualms about the implications of the research by Baum and Valins, I find their research methodology to be beyond reproach. Deriving meaningful conclusions about important environmental factors such as crowding in contexts such as cities, towns, housing projects, and institutional living units is often very difficult, if not impossible. Differences in the characteristics of the populations inhabiting different environments, and the multitude of variables associated with these environments, make attempts at causal inference generally unwarranted. Yet Baum and Valins have overcome such threats to invalidity in rather elegant and thoughtful ways. In all phases of their research project, they carefully check the validity of their various assumptions. They painstakingly establish the a priori comparability of the students in the different dormitories and with similar care develop their theoretical scheme. Their research is also commendable in its use of a broad range of methodologies from observation of resident behavior in the dormitories to examination of their behavior in laboratory settings. While some of the major findings of the book have been published previously in journal form, and some additional chapters reviewing relevant research by others and its implication for their theoretical approach would have been desirable, this book serves as an excellent model for the researcher in environmental psychology and for students who plan to do field research.

Synthesizing Child Psychiatry

Michael Rutter and Lionel Hersov (Eds.)

Reviewed by Harris S. Goldstein

Michael Rutter is Professor of Child Psychiatry at the University of London and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist at the Children's Department of the Maudsley Hospital. An MD of the University of Birmingham, and a FRCP (London) and a FRC Psych., he was previously Consultant in Psychological Medicine at the Hospital for Sick Children. Hersov is Joint Editor of the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines, and Vice-President of the International Associa-