stated aims of the unit were to provide assessment and treatment of patients with a personality disorder and amenable to treatment, and mentally ill patients, who for a time require intensive nursing care under conditions of medium security.

The number of admissions during the six month study was 292 patients, compared with 1132 in three and half years, in the Adelaide unit. The latter was however a smaller unit (8 versus 24 beds). The mean length of stay in the Adelaide unit was shorter—4.8 days against 12 days. The two units had no significant differences in the mean age of admissions, or male:female ratio. There was a higher proportion of first admissions in the North Wales unit, and patients tended to be admitted more from other wards in the hospital. In Goldney *et al's* study there were significantly more admissions referred from police/courts, and other hospitals, whereas there were fewer referred directly from the community. There were no significant differences in the proportions of patients diagnosed as affectively disordered or with substance-induced organic mental disorder, but a significantly greater proportion of the Adelaide admissions were schizophrenic (40.3% versus 21%). There were no significant differences in the ratio of patients admitted for reasons of violence, but there were slightly more admitted in the North Wales unit as they were potentially suicidal. There were no differences found in the proportion of patients discharged directly into the community. A significantly higher proportion of the North Wales unit's admissions were informal (50% versus 3.5%).

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CORRECTION

In the paper by Dr Singh *et al* (*Journal,* February, **146,** 127–131) reference is made on page 129 to a Table which was, in fact, deleted during editing.

British Journal of Psychiatry (1985), **146,** 562–570

Book Reviews

Handbook of Psychiatry. Vol. 4. The Neuroses and Personality Disorders. Edited by G. F. M. RUSSELL and L. A. HERSOV. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1984. Pp 500. £40, £17.50 (paperback).

This work, the 4th volume of the *Handbook of Psychiatry,* was eagerly awaited. The themes of neurosis and personality disorders have always received poor treatment in general texts of psychiatry and the General Editor, in the Foreword to the book, describes how the formation of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Psychological Medicine* played an important role in the conception that available British books on psychiatry, arising from a variety of academic and clinical departments were lacking in authority. This realisation led to the need for rectification: a comprehensive, authoritative, multi-authored handbook representing all that is best in British psychiatry: the 'Maudsley Approach' to psychological medicine. The sub-editors of this part of the whole *Handbook,* have recognised the need, not only for academic instruction but also for clinical information. Their stated aim has been to produce a book which will not only instruct the teachers but will be read with profit by the clinical workers. They express the hope that the workers who will profit will include, not only psychiatrists and general practitioners, but also nurses, psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists. In order to encourage this wide readership sections are included written by members of all these professions.

Herein lies the flaw in the design: the multiplicity of authorship, there are 43 who have contributed sections, results in a failure of cohersion and a lack of that authority which was its aim. Certainly there are some excellent sections written by authors who have the credentials to provide the required authoritative review of their subject but the requirement that so many others should also be allotted space, has denied them the chance for excellence of contribution. A somewhat curious editorial decision was to invite one contributor to provide eight sections, five of which were con-

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