authors have propounded the thesis that the indulging of such a personality trait, whether genetic or acquired, is of transcending importance in the aetiology of coronary heart disease. The supposed bodily mechanism is through the hypothalamus, the autonomic nervous system, and the effects of released catecholamines upon blood lipids and clotting mechanisms.

It is an important concept, not to be lightly accepted or rejected. Reading this account one is incidentally a little surprised to find no mention of the similarities of this behaviour pattern with that which is classically regarded as typical of patients with a duodenal ulcer. The crucial questions are—is the concept true? and are the practical deductions the authors make from it valid? For myself I think the concept probably is true, but I doubt whether it has been adequately proved.

The deductions we are asked to draw from it are that healthy people who are leading Type A lives should be warned of the risk they run of developing coronary heart disease (CHD) and encouraged to change their life style; and that to those who already have overt CHD the same advice should be given but much more forcibly. The authors strongly suggest, but do not claim proof, that the patients' prognosis will thereby be much improved. The possibility that the same end might be achieved by drugs especially β -blocking ones, is not considered. Since in very many cases the first symptom of CHD takes the form of sudden death, it may seem unnecessary to consider this and wiser to impose a relaxed life style (the Type B person) on the whole community. But who would prophesy any public response whatever for such primary prevention? The authors however would say that a Type B person, whether genetically made that way, or a reformed A is a better person and easier to live with than is a practising Type A, however successfully filled with tranquillizers, cholesterol-reducers, and β -blockers. For secondary prevention—that is, when the subject already has angina or has had an infarct, as with the habit of smoking—the prospects of success with advice are vastly better.

The whole concept is as fascinating as it is important, and if accepted offers an opportunity of preventive medicine in industry and society at least as promising as was mass radiography for pulmonary tuberculosis. The reasons for acceptance however will not be found by the questioning doctor in this book which is written for laymen. For that he will need to read the medical journals and make up his mind thereafter. What he will find however in this book is a clear, well written, compelling and quite amusing account of the Type A man, how he will be recognized and how he should be treated, or to be more accurate how he should be made to treat himself. The apostolic fervour of the authors in favour of their theory does not, one is glad to note, blind them to the importance of the other accepted risk factors: smoking, a fatty diet, familial hyperlipidaemia, hypertension, carbohydrate intolerance, and so on. Thus the patient does get a reasonably balanced load of advice whether he be a pre-symptomatic, symptomatic, or even, as he often is today, post - coronary - bypass - operative. One is also more than delighted to see that that dreary pastime called jogging is given its quietus. Altogether a stimulating book, and fun to read.

H. A. DEWAR

The Vibration Syndrome. Edited by W. Taylor. (Pp. 226; £6.00). London: Academic Press. 1974.

This is the British Acoustical Society's special volume no. 2. Like its predecessor it is a collection of papers presented at a multi-disciplinary conference on a specific subject, although with a narrower appeal than the former which was on occupational hearing loss. Nevertheless, vibration syndrome is of great intrinsic interest, for the cause remains elusive and it retains the fascination of an unsolved puzzle.

These eighteen papers presented at the University of Dundee in July 1972 are all of a high standard. Two are on legal aspects, six are medical, and the rest relate to the physical sciences or engineering. There is inevitably some repetition which shows not only in the text but in the references which appear after each paper, a factor which must also account for more unanimity of opinion than disagreement, a healthy sign in a relatively limited field.

The volume handles pleasantly. The typescript is excellent with a refreshing, but not absolute absence of typographical error. There are numerous tables, diagrams, and drawings which are exceptionally clear, emphasizing the inadequacy of the few which it was physically impossible to reproduce on a sufficient scale. The handful of photographic reproductions are not exciting but each manages to make its point. It is good to find a full author index and a general index.

From the medical standard, although a conference report, this is a useful source-book on vibration white finger (VWF) encompassing current views on the disease with references to most of importance in which has gone before. Though only the smaller part of the volume is devoted to medical matters, the papers on measurement of vibration highlight the difficulties what beset the physicist working in this field, and the engineers show ways in which the vibration of tools may be diminished; all this is useful knowledge to the doctor who has to care for work people at risk from VWF. There are two informative non-medical papers on wider aspects of vibration effects, one general and the other relating to personnel on oil tankers. The two legal chapters are short but deserve special mention as being worthy of attention from any doctor having to deal with industrial injuries or common law claims.

The opening remarks to the conference from the Chair implied the hope that out of it would come an acceptance of vibration standards but in any case it would lead to a cross-fertilization of ideas. The closing remarks make it clear that the first objective was not achieved as the cause-effect relationship was still not established but the second must have been because 'discussions were fruitful'. Unfortunately they were not reported. Would it be greedy of the reader to wish that he might have been allowed a taste of the fruit?

JOHN RICH