Book reviews

Children with Chronic Arthritis. A Primer for Patients and Parents. By G F Williams. (Pp. 365; illustrated. Hardback, price not given.) PSG Publishing Company: Massachusetts. 1981.

When a person is ill it is incumbent on the practising physician or surgeon to give him details of the condition and the prognosis, and if the patient is a child there is the double responsibility of informing both him and his parents. The author is an eminent American paediatrician from Stanford University (where he is clinical professor of paediatrics as well as a consultant in rheumatology) and the book, which is designed primarily for patients and parents, is eminently readable. It does not assume any previous medical knowledge, yet it succeeds in explaining the minutiae of paediatric rheumatology with considerable clarity. It covers all aspects including the anatomy and physiology of joints, immunology and pathology, as well as the clinical aspects of juvenile chronic arthritis (referred to by the American designation of JRA). Other important aspects dealt with in detail include the emotional effects of the disease, educational needs of patients, and the impact on other members of the family, especially the siblings. It is essentially a textbook of paediatric rheumatology for lay people and it will certainly inform those who want to be informed. The author does not fight shy of referring to serious, and even life-threatening complications, and there is considerable emphasis on forestalling trouble. There is good advice on when to call the doctor.

I suspect that few parents (and fewer patients) will have the necessary stamina and determination to read all of this long book; no doubt many will use it for reference purposes. However, it is recommended as compulsory reading for anyone caring for patients with juvenile arthritis.

R GRAHAME

The Development of Hearing. Its Progress and Problems. By S Yeates. Studies in Developmental Paediatrics Series. Vol. 2. Series Editor M Pollak. (Pp. 237;

illustrated and tables. £7.95 hardback.) MTP Press: Lancaster. 1980.

This is the second in a series of studies in developmental paediatrics. The text covers many facets of hearing development succinctly presented in short chapters outlining the pertinent physiological and physical considerations. Clinical methods of testing hearing in babies and young children are carefully described. The second half of the book deals mainly with hearing loss, its causes, management, treatment, and the implications for the child and his family.

The author's style is easy, descriptive, sometimes almost conversational, and abounds in personal touches. Case experiences are used to illustrate major points, and this gives the impression that the work is superficial or anecdotal; this is not true as the examples are carefully chosen and complement the preceding factual section to facilitate understanding. She has kept her intended readership well in mind and refrained from going into great detail or technical theory, simply stressing important points of clinical relevance; not all authors are able to curtail this desire.

Sybil Yeates's intention was to provide doctors and those who work with hearing-impaired children, as well as those concerned with hearing screening programmes, with a sound working knowledge and a practical source of reference. In addition she has provided a section on paediatric conditions associated with hearing loss, including the characteristics of the loss and genetic implications. This could be helpful to doctors working in any field of paediatrics, and should alert audiologists to any child in their care who is likely to have other paediatric problems. She has succeeded in both aims; the result is a book written with a sensitivity which is clearly based on and emanates from her own extensive clinical experience.

This book should find a place on the shelves of all doctors working with children and be readily available in clinics and surgeries to all disciplines participating in developmental surveillance.

PATRICIA M SONKSEN
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Neonatal Orthopaedics. By R N Hensinger and E T Jones. Monographs in Neonatology Series. (Pp. 319 inc index; illustrated + tables. £26.20 (\$39.50) hardback.) Grune & Stratton: New York. 1981.

The authors are two American academic orthopaedic surgeons, and they express the hope that this book will stimulate more of their colleagues to enter the neonatal unit. They stress the importance of early diagnosis and treatment at this critical time of life, when bones and joints are both plastic and growing rapidly, thus enabling the surgeon more readily to achieve normal alignment and joint congruity. Starting with chapters on growth and development, and clinical and radiological examination the text then deals with trauma, infection, skeletal dysplasias, and soft tissue problems. Finally there are five chapters on deformities of the spine, hips, upper and lower limbs, and feet.

The text is clear and easy to read, and there are 143 illustrations but unfortunately many of them are of indifferent quality. Each chapter has its own bibliography and the total number of references is 469; this is one of the most useful aspects of the book. The main criticism is that in the attempt to be all-embracing in one small volume the authors have written too little about too much; perhaps this was intended in order to stimulate the reader to consult more definitive works. Many people may feel that the price is too great to pay for a primer however good it may be.

PETER M DUNN

Neurology of the Newborn. By J J Volpe. Major Problems in Clinical Pediatrics Series. Vol. 22. Series Editors A J Schaffer and M Márkowitz. (Pp. 648 including index; illustrated + tables. £35.75 hardback.) Saunders: Philadelphia. 1981.

This is a personal account of the neurology of the newborn that presents the subject in a balanced and clear context. The book covers human brain development, neurological evaluation, hypoxic-ischaemic brain