Book reviews

Childhood Diabetes. The Facts. By O Craig. Pp. 163: £5.95 hardback. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

In contrast to the author's previous writings on the subject this book is aimed at parents of diabetic children. Topics covered include causes of diabetes, physiology of insulin secretion, monitoring diabetic control, insulin preparations and injection techniques, effects of behaviour and emotion on diabetic control, and the diabetic diet. The best chapter is that entitled 'The long view'. Here the author puts the disorder and its treatment into perspective. He discusses early reactions to diagnosis, growth and adolescence, marriage, life expectancy, and the risks of diabetic complications. Two chapters dealing with the causes of diabetes and insulin physiology are far too detailed for the lay reader, although very useful for medical students. The section on insulin strengths is already dated and should be reviewed in a subsequent edition in the light of the change to U 100 insulin. There is also a useful chapter entitled 'Special points in diabetic care'. This includes the effects of intercurrent illness and major surgery on diabetic control, tips on travel for the diabetic, insurance policies, and the dangers of smoking. The final chapter is on diet; it is detailed, practical, and adopts a sensible approach to the question of dietary fibre.

This book is well written, easy to read, and contains many amusing anecdotes which are so characteristic of Dr Craig's writings and talks. Will parents read it? Those who are motivated and well informed certainly will and will find it extremely helpful. Parents attending my clinic will be recommended to purchase this reasonably priced book. Unfortunately, those parents who do not learn from the spoken word, let alone the written word, will not benefit from this excellent book, even though they would have most to gain from it. In addition, I would also recommend this book as compulsory reading for medical personnel concerned with the care of diabetic children, be they health visitors, dietitians, social workers, or (and above all!) paediatricians.

I A HUGHES

The Child with Multiple Birth Defects. By M M Cohen. Pp. 189: \$39.68 hardback. New York: Raven Press, 1982.

What do you do if you see a child with a peculiar facial appearance, very broad thumbs, bifid big toes, and an extra nipple? Probably you turn to Smith *Recognizable patterns of human malformation*, (third edition. Saunders: Philadelphia, 1982) if you think it is a syndrome and want to try and discover which it is, or indeed if you recognise that it is the Rubinstein-Taybi syndrome and want to check. If, however, you are interested in the pathogenesis or rationale of syndromes, then your task has hitherto been difficult.

Now we have a book that systematically covers the pathogenesis of syndromes, with chapters on the distinction between malformations, deformations, and disruptions (good); syndrome prototypes; the nature of syndrome delineation; aetiological and pathogenetic heterogeneity (very good); a clinical approach to syndrome diagnosis; dysmorphic growth and development; neoplastic aspects of syndromology; mental deficiency and syndromology; psychosocial aspects of syndromology (very good); syndrome concepts, designations, and taxonomy (weak); and finally anthropometric and statistical aspects.

Any paediatrician keen to understand syndromes rather than just attach labels will be interested in this book. It is well presented, fairly easy to follow, and beautifully illustrated. There are only two defects. One is that the early part of the book is particularly suffused with turgid and bewildering jargon that confuses rather than clarifies. For example, 'variant-additive patterns', 'intrinsic malformational deformation', and 'dyshistogenetic syndromes'. I advise the reader to ignore the terminology, a sort of teratological equivalent of SI units, and stick to the text. The other more serious defect is that opinions and data are sometimes very uncritically presented as fact. This especially applies to some of the tables, where the reader is often barred from studying the facts for himself by the omission of references.

Only a passionate dysmorphologist would want a personal copy, but this

excellent book ought to be available in paediatric departments or special care baby units, for it is likely to stimulate as well as inform.

T J DAVID

Atlas of children's growth. Normal variation and growth disorders. By J M Tanner and R H Whitehouse. Pp. 206: £145 hardback. London: Academic Press, 1982.

This is a monumental book. In it are recorded the studies of human growth conducted by Jim Tanner and Reg Whitehouse between 1948 and 1982. The major part is devoted to a detailed account in text, charts and photogrammetric pictures of the growth of 32 normal boys and 20 normal girls, selected from the full cohort of several hundred, to illustrate the variability of development and mature body build. Subsequent chapters describe growth at puberty, similarities and differences between twins and siblings, changes between 20 and 35 years and finally some endocrine, skeletal, and other pathological conditions affecting growth.

The book is a fitting monument to a unique longitudinal study in human biology, which has provided much of the basic canon of knowledge concerning growth and development, normal and abnormal. It is monumental also in size and, inevitably, in price. Biologists and clinicians with a special interest in growth will wish to visit this monument not only for information but also for scientific inspiration; their admiration will be mixed with awe.

N D BARNES

Virus Infections of the Gastrointestinal Tract. Edited by D A J Tyrell and A Z Kapikian. Pp. 486: Sw Fr 170 hardback. New York: Dekker, 1982.

The 1970s saw a remarkable explosion in knowledge of virus infections of the gastrointestinal tract in man. This great advance was due to the application of electron microscopy to the study of viruses. In 1972 the 27 nm Norwalk virus