Book reviews

Cardiovascular Problems in Paediatric Critical Care. Edited by David W Swedlow and Russell C Raphaely. Pp 311: £35.00 hardback. Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

The objective of this book is to give a comprehensive overview of current aspects of cardiovascular physiology as required by those concerned with paediatric intensive care and to deal in some detail with all aspects of investigation and management of cardiovascular problems as they present in the intensive care unit. This volume is clearly written from the point of view of specialist intensive therapists and is aimed chiefly at those who are training in that field of paediatric care. It would seem to be aimed largely at the American market and much of its content is heavily biased towards North American practice.

The general concept of this monograph is sound and might be expected to have wide appeal to paediatricians, paediatric surgeons, and paediatric anaesthetists who are concerned with intensive care, but in practice the book is unbalanced and probably of rather limited value to a high proportion of its potential readership. The initial section on cardiovascular physiology is lengthy and makes heavy reading, but it does include a wealth of information on most aspects of cardiovascular physiology and is very heavily referenced (more than 450 references for this chapter alone).

Two chapters on investigation follow: the first of these (non-invasive tests) provides a detailed account of echocardiography as it relates to assessment of ventricular function and pulmonary artery pressure, radionuclide imaging, and Doppler assessment of cardiac output. There is a brief mention of computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging (currently of doubtful relevance in the intensive care unit environment). The chapter on invasive assessment discusses a variety of arterial and venous cannulation sites and methods plus details of pressure monitoring and cardiac output measurement by dye dilution, thermodilution, etc. Systemic and pulmonary resistance calculations are also discussed briefly. A further fairly large and heavily referenced chapter relates to anaesthetic considerations of cardiac patients and is aimed specifically at those involved in cardiac anaesthesia and post-operative care.

The remaining one third of the book covers treatment. A chapter on 'preload manipulation' repeats a great deal of the information contained in the first chapter on cardiovascular physiology and actual discussion of treatment is limited to two pages. A brief chapter dealing with 'after-load manipulation' largely comprises a series of dose regimes of different vasodilators. Again the chapter on 'contractility' repeats much of the physiology and gives limited practical information about inotropic drugs (all with American names). The final two chapters on heart rate and rhythm and cardiopulmonary resuscitation are both of rather limited value. Arrhythmias are dealt with superficially and anti-arrhythmic drugs are limited to those currently available in the United States (neither amiodarone nor flecainide get a mention).

All in all this is a rather disappointing and unbalanced book that will not be of value as a manual on cardiovascular aspects of intensive care; the sections on cardiovascular physiology and non-invasive investigation, however, do contain much useful information and may prove a valuable source of reference. For this reason, and in view of the relatively low price by current standards, the book should find a place in the libraries of institutions with a paediatric intensive care unit. Being orientated largely towards older children and infants (beyond the neonatal period), however, it is less likely that this volume will prove useful to those concerned specifically with neonatal intensive care.

J L WILKINSON

Breasts, Bottles and Babies. By Valerie Fildes. Pp. 462: £19.75 hardback. Edinburgh University Press, 1986.

This is an excellent reference book and source material for anyone interested in the history of infant feeding and the folklore surrounding it. The main part of the book comprises the author's PhD thesis on infant feeding between 1500 and 1800—from the beginning of printed books to the end of the pre-industrial period. Her review is world wide but concentrates principally on Europe and, of course, the United Kingdom. The significant changes in the relations between doctors, midwives,

and the public on the views and advice given on infant feeding are well recorded. At a time when paediatricians and midwives are promoting breast feeding it is as well to remember that it was sometimes regarded as being only suitable for 'wet nurses' and those of a lower station. The most remarkable pioneers in changing this attitude were those upper class mothers who were prepared to break this convention and work at the founding hospitals in this country. The first part of the book shows some signs of having been added on in order to make the book more comprehensive. Nevertheless, the views of antiquity and the medieval period towards infant feeding are elegantly expressed.

Throughout the book there are excellent references and reproductions in black and white of pictures and line drawings of original feeding vessels and paintings all concerned with infant feeding. This could be sheer delight to the art historian, and would certainly complement the excellent collection that the late Ronald Mackay assembled about the art of infant feeding. It would be pleasing to think that such a text book was available at any district general hospital, however, the price and the somewhat epigrammatic title might not off a serious reader.

C H NOBLE

Advances in Pediatric Infectious Diseases. Volume 2. Editor in Chief S C Aronoff. Pp 192: £21.50 hardback. Year Book Medical Publishers, 1987.

In this second volume of a series directed at general paediatricians the editors have chosen eight subjects of current interest for review. The range is broad, but there is welcome coordination of several contributions. The target of topicality is hit straight away in the first chapter. Protection of young children against invasive infections caused by *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) is a new public health goal, and immunisation regimes using various different modifications of capsular antigens are currently being used or considered for use in the United States and Europe. In their chapter on the epidemiology and immunology of infections with Hib, Hetherington and Lepow provide the essential basis for evaluating such strategies.