Book reviews

Craniosynostosis. Diagnosis, Evaluation and Management. Edited by M M Cohen Jr. Pp 606: \$148.50 hardback. Raven Press, 1986.

The craniosynostoses are not common conditions but as plastic surgeons, neurosurgeons, and others get together to form craniofacial teams more cases are being seen who might not otherwise have been considered candidates for surgical treatment for either cosmetic reasons alone or to avert neurodevelopmental problems due to cerebral compression.

This book achieves a remarkable balance, not only providing an excellent and comprehensible overview of the subject but also by going into certain technical areas (surgery and genetics, for example) in such depth that even an expert will have much to learn. This must be due in great measure to the skill of the editor, Professor M Michael Cohen Jr. Already well known in neurosurgical circles for his articles on the genetic syndromes associated with craniosynostosis, here he provides almost half the text himself, while the remainder is entrusted to a highly selected and prestigious group of contributors. Among these I would pick out Ronald J Lemire (Embryology), Thomas P Naidich (Radiology), John A Jane (Neurosurgical treatment), and, the doyen of craniofacial surgeons, Paul Tessier. But this list should not lead one to assume that the other chapters are not of a high calibre and I would select Sven Kreiborg on the 'post natal growth and development of the craniofacial complex in premature craniosynostosis' as an excellent review of this thorny subject, where the possibility that early surgical intervention to the skull base sutures will allow the face to grow forwards normally in the future is still hotly debated. Dr Kreiborg's view (and I would agree with him here) is that the growth of the facial structures is more dependent on the patient's syndrome and the primary impairment of facial growth that implies than to any restriction placed on it by the prematurely fused sutures of the skull base and vault.

Overall, I would call this a model textbook. The production with regard to its photographs and drawings is excellent. Where knowledge is scanty and opinions count for more than facts its views are

moderate. Yet where order must be imposed on areas of chaos (as in Professor Cohen's dealings with the syndrome hunters) it has the ring of true authority.

RICHARD HAYWARD

Clinical Paediatric Nephrology. Edited by R J Postlethwaite. Pp 495: £35.00 hardback. Wright, 1986.

This is a first rate, comprehensive textbook that covers the whole range of renal medicine and includes three useful chapters on urological problems. There are nearly 40 authors, well known for their contributions to paediatric nephrology, from both sides of the Atlantic.

Separate chapters are devoted to major presenting symptom complexes and signs—namely hypertension, haematuria, proteinuria, oedema, enlarged kidneys, wetting, and infection. These guide us logically through causes, investigations, and management. Glomerulonephritis is well covered, and management of acute and chronic renal failure is described in detail. There are two excellent chapters on those difficult subjects, renal tubular disorders and cystic disease, written from the clinical point of view.

Discussion of urinary tract infection includes the clinical features at different ages, methods of urine collection, and the importance of symptomatic and asymptomatic bacteriuria. Investigations and management are described fully, but not all paediatricians would agree with the recommendation that invasive investigations, intravenous urography and micturating cystourethrography, be performed in all children under 5 after the first infection. Ultrasound examination, which is completely painless and almost as informative, is now an acceptable alternative, as mentioned in a later section of the book.

The difficult problem of treating the neuropathic bladder, and numerous abnormalities that require the attention of the paediatric urologist, are described lucidly, management being summed up by the adage, 'All you can do is kill the germs and fix the plumbing'. An excellent review, liberally illustrated, of imaging techniques together with chapters on growth, bone

disease, homeostasis, and investigation of renal function complete the contents.

The book is clearly written and the illustrations are excellent. The numerous references are completely up to date, some as recent as 1986, and the price is modest. It will serve as both a guide to generalists and a reference text for specialists. I strongly recommend it.

MARTIN MONCRIEFF

Childhood Epidemiology. *Br Med Bull* 1986 42 (2). Edited by E D Alberman and C Peckham. Pp 219: £16.00 softback. Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

The authors' stated aim is to show how recent developments in childhood epidemiology have grown out of an awareness that epidemiological studies in childhood must relate to genetic and environmental factors that influence growth and development as well as to the natural history of disease. The authors achieve their aim but they also provide a very valuable, tightly packed mass of information about the aetiology and distribution of the whole range of disease in childhood. The chapter on infections is a model of simplicity and clarity. Unfortunately, not all of the subjects lend themselves to a similar approach, and although the information is always there, the reader sometimes has to hunt to find the message.

About half of the contributions are concerned with aspects of growth and development. As well as excellent accounts of problems of hearing and vision these provide a very useful discussion of patterns of morbidity and mortality at all ages of childhood and include an important section on special and intensive care for neonates. The chapters on physical and on behavioural and intellectual development provide useful critical discussion of methods as well as the usual facts. This part of the book, together with the chapters concerned with the effects of environment and with prevention, should be required reading not only for community paediatricians but for politicians, general managers, and all who have responsibility for the allocation of resources.