malformations, both common and rare, are included, but ano-rectal defects with associated urological disorders are omitted, as are vertebral defects in relation to the formation and function of the urinary tract. Embryology and descriptions of operations are included in some of the chapters, but many of the writers have referred the reader to other volumes of the encyclopedia for details.

This book will be welcomed by all urologists, paediatric and plastic surgeons, and gynaecologists.


This gigantic volume with 1739 pages of text and 76 of index, an editorial board of 13, with 163 contributors, and weighing and costing more than ten pounds, defies serious reviewing. Certainly it covers the biological and physiological mechanisms involved in paediatric symptomatology, pathology, and clinical investigations, competently and comprehensively, and indeed, many of the chapters are masterly expositions of their subject. Certainly also, much of the text can, only by stretching the use of words, be said to have immediate relevance to the title.

Briefly, Part I, a mere 95 pages, entitled 'Sciences Fundamental to the Understanding of Growth and Maturation', has 5 chapters; 'The Cell', with some beautiful electronmicroscopy pictures, 'Heredity', well dealt with in 10 all too brief pages, and 3 with the grandiose titles, 'Intelligence', 'The Biopsychology of Social Behaviour in Animals', and 'The Social Biology of Human Beings', each needing a volume of its own, polished off in 50 pages.

Part II, the real core of the book, occupying 1200 pages, is, with some inevitable overlapping, brilliant; though here and there the bombastic American wording almost defies translation into the English language.

And then Part III, 'The Total Child': indeed the whole of him, including a host of aspects relevant and irrelevant. 'Genetics' and 'Cytogenetics', both excellent, might well have been included in Part I, while the chapters on 'The Battered Baby Syndrome', 'Adoption', 'Paediatric Jurisprudence', 'Sex Education', and 'Athletics', might surely have been left to a straight paediatric textbook.

It seems a pity to have to cavil at such superabundance, but unavoidably the feeling is engendered that a less permissive Editorial Board, and a smaller group of more disciplined contributors would have given us a book of more manageable proportions. As it is, the seeker with strong arms, able to reach it down from his stoutest shelf, will, more often than not, be rewarded by finding in these pages what he wants to know.


This is a small paperback volume which contains the edited transcript of the proceedings of a conference held in Bethesda, Maryland in May 1967, under the auspices of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Heart Institute with the object of discussing the viral mechanisms of congenital malformations from the points of view of different disciplines.

There were 12 participants under the chairmanship of Dr. Kurt Benirschke, with 7 visitors, and as a result the meeting was informal. The topics discussed are arranged under 12 headings, each having a short introduction.

The subjects covered include the results to date in the Perinatal Research Study begun by the N.I.H. in 1959 (L. R. White), the immunological response of the fetus (A. M. Silverstein), the functions of the placenta (J. Dancis), and virus infections of it (K. Benirschke), and epidemiological approaches to aetiological problems (R. W. Miller).

There is a good deal of information hidden away in the conversational sections, perhaps more than in the short introductions, but it is difficult to find as there is no subject index. No doubt a verbatim record is valuable and can be stimulating, but it does not make for easy reading when presented in such a literal transcript, which would have been greatly improved if the editor could have discarded the conversational trivia.


There has been an enormous amount of talk and writing about the thymus, much of it oversimplified and partisan. Paediatricians have been rightly involved (not always wisely, as is instanced by the unhappy concept of status lymphaticus) because the thymus is large in early life, and looks important. The clear demonstration of a role in development of specific immunity mechanisms has cleared the air, but extrapolations to clinical situations have been uncritical, and the relevance of the enormous differences in different species has not always been appreciated.

Therefore, even if it is yet another of many, this critical review, which stresses the evidence in favour of divergent views, without coming to ill-founded generalized conclusions, is welcome. It is a valuable, up-to-date source of references (many from 1967), sufficiently selective that the bibliography is not too big, without any serious omissions which I noted, even if a few selections on the edge of the field seem eccentric. The English style, though not perfectly idiomatic, is readable, and a remarkable achievement for one writing in a foreign language (there is no mention that this is a translation). Only the title seems odd—the book deals with the role of the thymus in immunity, and is by
no means confined to data arising from experimental thymectomy.

To cover such a wide field in such a short space (78 pages) has led to a feeling of compression, and some aspects get scant treatment—for instance, there is little discussion of the effect of thymectomy in immunity to different organisms, and the very difficult and intriguing problem of auto-immune phenomena in thymectomized animals is only just mentioned. But as a short source of detached criticism of the apparently divergent views on the functions of the thymus, for paediatricians whose interest and critical faculties have both been excited by the many recent clinical papers in this field, this book can be strongly recommended. But they won’t end up with the comforting delusion that they know the whole story.


This volume is one of a series of monographs on various aspects of cancer, published for the International Union against Cancer. It is an up-to-date clinical and pathological account of the tumours of childhood, based mainly on the experience of the Manchester Children’s Tumour Registry which was started in 1953 and now has records of more than 1400 cases. The 14 contributors include members of the Manchester group and other workers, such as H. B. Stallard and the late Saul Keidan, who have special experience in various aspects of children’s tumours.

Tumours are now second to accidents in the list of main causes of death in children aged 1 to 15 years in both the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. Nevertheless, apart from the leukaemias, tumours in childhood are relatively uncommon. For example, other than brain tumours, no hospital region in this country has more than 50 children with non-leukaemic tumours, or more than 6 children with Wilms’ tumour, each year. In England and Wales between 1953 and 1962, the 3759 fatal cases of non-leukaemic tumours in children were treated in 601 hospitals—0·6 cases per hospital per year. In the opening chapter of this book these figures are used to make the point that the treatment of tumours in childhood must be centralized in big cities without regard to hospital regions. Centres would then have sufficient patients to employ specialist teams who would be able to gain experience and evaluate treatment methods.

Each group of tumours is featured in a separate chapter. Pathology, clinical features, treatment, and prognosis are discussed in detail with excellent and profuse illustrations, and there are numerous references. As might be expected from a world expert, the chapter by H. B. Stallard on retinoblastoma is outstanding.

For those who are not fortunate enough to be within referral distance of centres like Manchester, and therefore have to treat their own 0·6 cases a year, this work is a mine of useful information. The sections on treatment, however, necessarily reflect the present lack of decisive evidence as to which are the methods of choice. It might have been more helpful for the amateur therapist if these discursive reviews of treatment had been followed by a brief summary of the methods of treatment favoured by the authors at the present time.

It is a great credit to the Manchester team that they should have been invited to contribute to this international series of monographs on cancer. They have responded by producing a unique work of reference which should achieve international recognition. No medical library should be without it.


At first sight, 138 pages devoted to the subject of torticollis in infancy and childhood might seem excessive. But first and foremost this is a work of scholarship, beautifully produced by Charles C. Thomas in the Pediatric Surgical Monograph Series.

The published work from Hippocrates to the present day is carefully appraised and considered in the light of the author’s considerable personal experience of torticollis. The meat of the book is his prospective study of 99 patients, over a period of 6 years, with additional information gained from a further 156 patients included where relevant.

These cases are considered in great detail and the natural history of the condition and its relation to plagiocephaly and neonatal scoliosis is established. Many cherished and well-known views (and several lesser known ones), concerning the aetiology of the condition, are laid to rest, though Mr. Jones is unable himself to tell us the cause of this perplexing condition. He does, however, give a rational scheme of management.

Finally this work is a model of clinical research, which others engaged in similar projects could profitably follow.


This book reports the results of an investigation into the causes of blindness in children attending schools for the visually handicapped; the majority were registered as blind but some were partially sighted. Approximately 23% of the blind child population of England and Wales was examined, but the sample was not entirely representative as very few of the ineducable blind were seen, and the 0–4 age-group was under-represented. None the less, this is a very impressive and important document, and the authors stress genetic and biological
Experimental Thymectomy. Possibilities and Limitations

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Updated information and services can be found at:
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