Book Reviews

The Infant Cry. A Spectrographic and Auditory Analysis. By D. Wasz-Höckert, J. Lund, V. Vuorenkoski, J. Partanen, and E. Valanne. Clinics in Developmental Medicine no. 29. (Pp. viii + 42; illustrated + tables + record 35s.; $4.50.) Spastics International Medical Publications in Association with William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. 1968. This slim volume of 42 pages should be studied by every child health specialist. The material for this report is drawn from extensive research studies which have been carried out in Scandinavia in recent years. A great deal of useful information is provided about the nature of the infant's cry which is, after all, one of the most important clinical signs for paediatricians.

This information has been obtained by precise spectrographic and auditory analysis, and full details of this are given in the text. Clinicians should be aware of the valuable information which can be obtained from this type of detailed scientific study, so that they will increasingly apply this approach to clinical work. The monograph is clearly produced and contains many excellent illustrations.

This publication is No. 29 in the series in Clinics in Developmental Medicine, and both authors and publishers of this volume are to be congratulated on this useful addition to an admirable series.


This monograph provides a remarkably comprehensive examination of the current status of the problem of urinary tract infection in childhood and its relevance to renal disease in later life.

The author reviews the literature on the incidence, aetiology, diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of the disease, and relates it to her own extensive clinical experience using case histories to illustrate certain points. In particular she discusses the vexed problems of the role of vesico-ureteric reflux and the diagnosis of urinary tract infection in childhood emphasizing again the frequent silence of the disease process. She also makes some interesting observations on possible methods of prevention.

The number of figures quoted from the literature are almost overwhelming, and reveal the difficulties inherent in comparing results from different centres. There is an extensive bibliography, and also an author and subject index.

The book should be read not only by paediatricians, but also by general practitioners and adult physicians, in the hope that it will inspire more enthusiastic management and follow-up of these patients. This should lead to a better understanding of the natural history of the disease, the development of methods of prevention, and a reduction in the morbidity and mortality from chronic pyelonephritis.

are also a new feature. Many references to the original publications are appended in all sections.

It is perhaps inevitable that some deficiencies will be revealed. Few would agree that proven congenital lactase deficiency, at any rate in children, is more common than congenital sucrase deficiency, the diagnosis of which has, contrary to the authors' statement, been supported by enzyme assays on jejunal mucosal biopsies.

One might wonder whether some of the enzyme assays are not presented in too simple a fashion. It is doubtful, for example, whether many hospital laboratories would wish to embark upon the routine assay of the enzymes of glycogen metabolism. The method of determination of plasma iron and iron-binding capacity by atomic absorption spectrometry has been separated from their colorimetric estimation by 140 pages. It is surprising to learn that, for example, the serum γ-globulin of the premature infant at 12 months of age is higher than that of the corresponding full-term infant, and that in the newborn the mean plasma iron at birth is actually greater than the mean iron-binding capacity. For those wishing to find normal levels and levels in disease it would be useful to know whether the values quoted are the authors' or from the literature. A more complete index would be helpful, though the arrangement of the contents serves the purpose to some extent.

These do not detract from the great merits of this book which every paediatric chemical pathologist, and indeed all chemical pathologists should have in their laboratories.

The title of the second book is misleading since its contents are confined to clinical chemistry, mainly methods, and do not include other branches of clinical pathology. Furthermore, though some of the methods have been only recently introduced, many have been in routine use in hospital for many years.

This volume underlines the growing realization that micro- and ultramicro-methods of clinical chemistry, mainly developed under the stimulus of the requirements in infants and children, can usefully be employed for adult patients. This application has been facilitated by the Auto-Analyser. They offer advantages but also one drawback—the collection of blood samples, which is a skilled operation and requires much technician time.

The first six chapters deal with methods of estimation of individual components in blood, inorganic, organic, or enzymes, with some commentary on their clinical significance. A useful list of references is given at the end of each chapter. They are those in use in the authors' laboratory, and very full practical details are given. It is surprising that the estimation of blood sugar is preferred to that of blood glucose, and sweat chloride to sweat sodium. Most of the remaining chapters describe tests of function and their significance; these are often brief and not very illuminating, e.g. that on disaccharide intolerance.

As a practical manual to be used in the laboratory, the book is expensive, presumably because it is very well printed on fine paper. Of the two, the first may be preferred.