Book reviews

by John Kerner is a welcome addition to the subject. The text is divided into five sections beginning with an assessment of the nutritional status and indications for parenteral nutrition. The section on specific requirements for individual nutrients is extensive and informative. The last three sections are devoted to practical aspects and include chapters on a wide spectrum of complications that may be encountered. Each chapter is concluded by brief notes on practical guidelines and a very comprehensive bibliography.

A glaring omission is a section on surgical aspects, including technical details of central venous catheter insertion. With the exception of this criticism I would highly recommend this book for all those even remotely associated with the provision of parenteral nutritional treatment in infancy and childhood.

LEWIS SPITZ

Shorter notices


A collection of more than 500 clinical photographs of uncommon disorders together with explanatory legends ought to provide a useful book. Unfortunately the quality of the pictures and the way in which details described in the legend frequently cannot be seen in the photograph confuses and irritates the reader. At times it seems to be a case of poor selection of pictures, at others poor reproduction, and at others careless editing. The 54 distinguished medical teachers and the photographic departments of the Hospital for Sick Children Great Ormond Street and Northwick Park Hospital, whose 'generous help' is acknowledged, deserve a better fate.


This book contains a series of papers given by workshop participants covering the physiology of growth hormone release and related physiological tests, commonly used pharmacological stimuli of growth hormone secretion, the clinical value of measurement of somatomedins, and some statistical aspects of growth hormone assays. The standard of papers is inevitably patchy and there is too great an attempt made to present a dogmatic 'party line' in a rapidly changing field. The book is a good but very expensive source of references—to be borrowed, not bought.


This pamphlet provides birthweight for gestational age standards based on over 300 000 Scottish births, representing 95% of total births between 1975 and 1979. Tables and charts of centile values of birthweight, standardised for infant sex and previous pregnancies, are reported for live singleton births from 28 to 42 weeks' gestation. This large sample is more representative than previous reports, and may well be considered the best for use in clinical and research applications throughout the United Kingdom, as well as in Scotland itself.


This book is one of a long running four monthly series aimed primarily at haematologists. It is a detailed multiauthor review of the role of the spleen in health and disease, written by physicians, pathologists, and surgeons. Paediatricians will not find the contents particularly relevant except perhaps for one topic—the frequently discussed question of postsplenectomy sepsis—which is covered in some detail with a comprehensive bibliography.


There is a lot of interesting research and clinical information in this collection of papers on what is, and often what is not known about neonatal nephrology and electrolyte problems. This useful information could, however, be contained in a book a quarter of this size, and as a result perhaps half the price.