

Human Growth—A Comprehensive Treatise. Vol 1, 2, and 3. By Frank Falkner and JM Tanner. 2nd Ed. Pp 496, 555, and 552: \$83-40, \$90-00, and \$90-00 hardback. Plenum Press, 1986. ISBN 0306-419513, 0306-419521, and 0306-41953X.

The second edition of this 'comprehensive treatise' in three volumes has 18 new chapters (13 on subjects not in the first edition) but omits the previous long historical chapter now covered admirably in Tanner's *History of the Study of Human Growth*. The first volume entitled *Developmental Biology and Prenatal Growth* concentrates on many aspects of fetal and embryonic growth, including the physiology, biochemistry, pharmacology, endocrinology, and immunity, but extends into the postnatal period with the last two subjects and also with the sections on the outcome for low birthweight infants. The first section of volume 2, entitled 'Postnatal Growth', describes growth processes at various stages of development, including bone and dental growth, body composition and endocrine aspects. The second half, entitled 'Neurobiology' may be of less general interest, concentrating on fetal and neonatal neurological development in terms of histology and function. The first five chapters of volume 3, entitled 'Methodology', describe in detail techniques of postnatal anthropometry (fetal being in volume 1) and how to use and analyse data for individuals, growth studies, and standards. The chapters that follow cover the genetics of growth, including twins, and growth in relation to environment and secular changes.

The editors describe these volumes as being useful to paediatricians, human biologists, and all concerned with child health, and to biometrists, physiologists, and biochemists working in the field of growth. It is important, however, for potential readers and purchasers to be aware that these unique comprehensive books cover the morphological, physiological, and theoretical aspects of human growth, and as such are excellent, but they are not intended to present a clinical account of growth disorders, nor do they present growth charts and standards and cannot serve as reference manuals for these.

With contributions from 84 authors, the editors are to be congratulated on compiling these volumes so admirably without dictating style. Inevitably, however, there is a lack of consistency in the form and depth of the chapters, and there is a certain amount of overlap and repetition—for example, the

growth outcome for low birthweight infants and the age of menarche in different populations each appear in three different places. One can appreciate how difficult it would be to cross reference within the manual itself, but the reference lists at the end of each individual chapter are very comprehensive. Unfortunately the reader, who may not relish purchasing all three volumes, may find difficulty in locating some subjects of interest to them, as the volumes, which are separately indexed, have titles and subtitles that are not always an adequate guide.

Some subjects covered, such as certain 'disease processes', one would not anticipate, but there are presumably included because they throw light on the normal mechanisms of growth. Examples of these are clinical disorders of sexual development in relation to neuroendocrine control of puberty and the effect on growth of chromosomal anomalies, with descriptions of the associated clinical features. In contrast, certain subjects are dealt with in surprisingly little depth. There is a strong emphasis in these volumes on the fetus, perinatal period, and infancy (occupying over half the total contents), but much less on certain aspects in older children such as the later development of neurological function and behaviour, the effects of malnutrition in the long term, and the size of various organs and tissues postnatally. Though the effects of different social backgrounds are well considered, I was surprised to find little reference to psychosocial or emotional deprivation and abuse, which are so evident and important in present day society, whereas an entire and excellent chapter is devoted to physical activity and growth in the child.

These criticisms are, however, trivial compared with my overall very favourable impression of these books and I can certainly recommend their purchase, particularly for appropriate libraries.

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CICT: Pediatric Body CT. Vol 10. Edited by MJ Siegel. Pp 286: £47-50 hardback. Churchill Livingstone, 1988. ISBN 0443-085331.

Paediatricians whose clinical work dictates a high degree of dependence on diagnostic

imaging will find this book useful, dependent, and well referenced. There is comprehensive coverage of the major organs with the exception of the nervous system; interesting chapters on quantitative computer tomography and ultrafast computed tomography add a delightful update.

As imaging involves many modalities those chapters that compare imaging methods and therefore maintain a good perspective are welcomed but are unfortunately few. Many chapters hardly acknowledge the clinical perspective of the use of computed tomography but no book is without its faults.

The illustrations are of high quality and the legends on the whole are appropriate. Apart from covering all the organs in the abdomen and chest there are in addition chapters specifically devoted to the neck and the muscular skeletal system. These together with the two case studies provide an added completeness to the potential and at times overuse of computed tomography in paediatrics. The radiation burden of computed tomography fortunately has not been forgotten.

This is a useful book in which the editor has assembled acknowledged experts to write their appropriate chapters. It is essentially dedicated towards radiologists but enthusiastic paediatricians who are happy to look for specific information will find this book useful.

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Disorders of Gastrointestinal Motility in Childhood. Edited by PJ Milla. Pp 142: £21-50 hardback. John Wiley, 1988. ISBN 0 47191780X.

The rapid growth of paediatric gastroenterology has brought with it a number of monographs on various aspects of the subject. The latest is this which brings together 16 contributors from the United Kingdom, United States, and Belgium. Together they have produced a text which is clear, comprehensive, and of practical value to the practising paediatric gastroenterologist and general paediatrician.

The text is divided into four main sections. The first deals with the ontogeny of gastrointestinal motor activity. This is divided into three main chapters dealing with the