Book reviews

Pediatric Surgery. Third edition, in two volumes. Edited by M. M. Ravitch, K. J. Welch, C. D. Benson, E. Aberdeen, and J. G. Randolph. (Pp. 760 (volume 1), 862 (volume 2); illustrated + tables. £135.00 hardback (2 volumes cased). YB Medical Publishers: Chicago. 1979.

This book, the most comprehensive on the subject, is widely respected throughout the world and this 3rd edition maintains this high standard. Two of the 5 editors for this edition are new, as are two-thirds of the 152 authors. The result is that the current edition has been extensively revised and changed. 85% of the authors are from the USA and, with those from Canada, this gives the book some North American bias. As paediatric surgical problems are similar throughout the world this does not detract from the high international standing of the book. The content is wide ranging. It starts with a general section in which genetics, anaesthesia, intensive care, and general aspects of management are considered. Next trauma in a broad sense is discussed, from nonaccidental injury with all the usual injuries to less common ones—such as snake and spider bites. In the remaining two sections the head and neck, and thorax and cardiovascular system are discussed. Vol. 2 is divided into sections that deal with the abdomen, the genitourinary system, the integument and musculoskeletal system and, finally, the nervous system.

One addition which seems to contribute little to the book is that of some colour plates, but apart from these, the illustrations and presentation are of a high standard. In a work of this size it is inevitable that there will be an occasional detail which escapes the editors—such as the omission of duplications in the index (despite a chapter on duplications) or the omission of any discussion on hypertension in neuroblastoma (despite two earlier references to this). The only facet which does not seem to have adequate recognition is the use of diagnostic ultrasound, despite the considerable advances achieved with this technique. However the editors must be congratulated

on the very high standard they and the authors have set and maintained.

No unit undertaking paediatric surgery should do without this book, although its cost may make some units think twice before purchasing. The investment will be worth while.

D. G. YOUNG

Pediatric Trauma. Edited by R. J. Touloukian. (Pp. 646; illustrated + tables. £24.95 hardback.) Wiley: Chichester. 1978.

This book with its 22 collaborators, all widely known in paediatric surgery, aims to describe in detail the special factors in the care of the injured child from the time he or she is first picked up at the site of the accident. These are: transport, resuscitation, diagnosis, anaesthesia, operation, postoperative management, and rehabilitation.

Accidents are so common in childhood that a good book of this type is always worth having. In the first part there is detailed description of the psychological effects of injury, of anaesthesia and resuscitation, birth injuries and battering, while in the second part, injuries of the organ systems are dealt with in detail and the diagnosis of management in each system is well described. A surgeon might be forgiven for questioning whether the properly trained paediatrician should assume the role of team captain, as is suggested in the preface to this book, and while some minor injuries may be treated by a physician without the help of a surgeon, many of the major injuries described in this book depend on good surgical management and perhaps it is not too old-fashioned to hope that the surgeon should be called in and that he will even be among the first to see the patient.

There is an excellent chapter on evaluation and initial management which could be read with profit by anyone who deals with injured children. This is an excellent book and, unlike some which have purported to deal with injuries in childhood, this one really does. It also sticks to the problems of the child rather than slipping in little bits of adult surgery

here and there. There are many good line drawings and indeed some of these are much better than the photographs. There are good and extensive lists of references at the end of each chapter. This book can be recommended as a good guide for those who need help in the treatment of the injured child. It should be in any hospital which treats children.

A. W. WILKINSON

Spinal Muscular Atrophy: Infantile and Juvenile Type. Edited by Irena Hausmanowa-Petrusewicz. (Pp. 180; illustrated + tables. \$9 North America; \$18 foreign, hardback.) National Center for Scientific, Technical, and Economic Information: Warsaw. 1978. (Available from US Department of Commerce, National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia 22161, USA).

This valuable monograph is based on the rich experience of the Department of Neurology, Warsaw School of Medicine.

It is divided into 14 chapters that cover history, clinical features, classification, morphology, electrophysiology, radiology, psychology, biochemistry, immunology, differential diagnosis, prognosis, genetics, and treatment. The author's experience is compared with that of other workers. There are 521 references and the many pathological illustrations show clearly the changes detailed in their captions. The translation is excellent.

The Warsaw classification of these disorders differs from that more widely used, but the relationship between their type Ia cases (classical Werdnig-Hoffmann disease), type Ib (protracted cases of Werdnig-Hoffmann), type II (intermediate between these two extremes), and type III (Kugelberg-Welander disease) is clearly stated. The total of 310 cases is made up of 79, 77, 59, and 95 respectively in these four categories.

The muscle biopsies are compared with control biopsies from young children (from another source). Muscle cells from affected children show a morphological resemblance to fetal muscle, and this, with a fetal-type muscle protein pattern and the

interesting electrophysiological finding in Werdnig-Hoffmann disease of initially slow peripheral nerve conduction velocity, which later becomes normal, suggests that spinal muscular atrophy may be due to persistence of fetal features. This hypothesis suggests that the difference between the various clinical types depends

on the number of fibres affected during fetal life, and the stage of fetal development when the presumed insult responsible occurs.

The section on prognosis is very brief and I was disappointed not to find more information based on the large number of cases.

The chapter on treatment is necessarily short, but it is interesting to read of the therapeutic approach with vigorous exercise in the group III patients.

This is an important book for all who are interested in these disorders.

E. M. BRETT