Book reviews

Development Defects and Syndromes. By M. A. Salmon and R. H. Lindenbaum. (Pp. 432; illustrated + tables. £30.00 hardback.) HM + M Publishers: Aylesbury. 1978.

The paediatrician or clinical geneticist in search of a syndrome to fit his patient has recourse to a substantial and still growing library of 'syndrome books', for which he is eternally thankful. These have originated almost exclusively from the USA and include Smith's *Recognizable Patterns of Human Malformation*, Bergsma's *Birth Defects Atlas and Compendium*, McKusick's *Mendelian Inheritance in Man* among others. A British addition to this library must therefore be welcomed but, at the same time, it must be judged by the standards set by the earlier American texts. Dr Salmon has assembled information on more than 200 congenital defects and syndromes, with high quality illustrations of most of them. In the first 13 chapters the syndromes are grouped according to the system mainly affected. The last two chapters, on chromosomal syndromes, and an appendix on dermatoglyphics, occupy one-quarter of the book and are Dr Lindenbaum's contribution. There are additional appendices on pedigree symbols and some physical measurements of children.

For each syndrome is given a brief historical bibliography, detailed clinical features and, in most instances, a note on genetic or other aetiological factors. There are some notes about treatment, but this book is designed to help with diagnosis, not with clinical management. Even for genetic counselling, apart from the sections on chromosomal syndromes, the information given is often oversimplified and, occasionally, frankly misleading.

In practical use, the layout of the book is less than ideal. The order of syndromes within sections appears haphazard. The index is a challenge. The reader soon finds that the syndromes are indexed under S rather than under their initial letters, but multiple page references (there are 44 to cleft-palate) are unhelpful. Multiple small errors of omission and commission, in both matter and presentation, spoil what is potentially a very useful book.

I am sorry to have to write critically of a book which is for the most part good, and which represents an enormous investment of labour. However, the truth is that this first edition is not in the same class as its competitors, and at £30 it needs to be. The expenditure of a little more time and a lot more care should make the 2nd edition a winner.

R. W. SMITHELLS

Malignant Diseases of Infancy, Childhood, and Adolescence. Major Problems in Paediatrics, Volume 18. By A. J. Altman and A. D. Schwartz. (Pp. 531; illustrated + tables. £20.00 hardback.) Holt-Saunders: Eastbourne. 1978.

This book is one of a series on Major Problems in Clinical Paediatrics, which aims at providing the general paediatrician with an introduction to the problem of cancer in children, its epidemiology, diagnosis, and management. The book gives good review of the principles of chemotherapy, radiotherapy, the immunology of malignant disease, and the attempts at immunotherapy. Each chapter in the second part of the book deals with a major malignancy. The psychological effects of these diseases and their treatment on the child and the family are discussed. Some of the advice given, while appropriate for the American family and child with malignancy, will need to be modified for this country.

The book is very readable with a clear concise style, up-to-date information—even 1977 references are quoted—and good illustrations. There are some outstanding chapters; one deals with the metabolic haematological, neurological, and infectious complications of malignancy. The section on infections is first class and valuable. It is particularly good because it deals with problems that are likely to be seen in children when they first present or which may complicate their illness after they have left hospital. The subject is rarely considered in other oncology textbooks and was one of the features that convinced me that this was not just another book on tumours, but

one that would be of help, not only to the general paediatrician, but to those specialising in the management of these conditions.

J. S. MALPAS

Manual of Emergency Pediatrics. Second edition. Edited by R. M. Reece (Reece-Chamberlain). (Pp. 721; illustrated + tables. £10.75 soft cover.) Holt-Saunders: Eastbourne. 1978.

This book, written by Reece and 37 contributors, is intended for the paediatric emergency department as a guide to medical and surgical care of sick and injured children. There are 4 sections: true emergencies, presenting complaints (signs and symptoms), diagnostic entities, and procedures and therapeutics. It is difficult to understand this division. I should have thought that such things as neonatal gastric perforation, intussusception, volvulus, foreign bodies in the airway, trauma to the urinary tract, and rabies might be considered true emergencies rather than diagnostic entities.

The treatment of cardiorespiratory arrest is well done and would be helpful to inexperienced doctors. It is sad that this cannot be said about the greater part of this book. Experts in different fields would not refer to it and the inexpert would find little of practical use in the mass of information, so much of which is irrelevant to the subject. There are sections on undescended testes, varicocele, diabetes insipidus (3 pages listing 38 causes), inappropriate secretion of antidiuretic hormone (2½ pages), hypercalcaemia (1½ pages), dysfunctional uterine bleeding and curettage, breast enlargement (4 pages with 97 causes), and the treatment of leukaemia; while it lacks precision and detail where precise instructions are needed and where differential diagnosis is important. For instance, in the section on abdominal pain, the recurrent abdominal pain of schoolchildren is not mentioned: in the section on foreign bodies in the oesophagus, there is no mention of when removal of the object is advised: in sections on appendicitis (p. 12) and intussusception (p. 395) there

is no discussion of the vitally important variations from the classical picture and therefore of the difficulties in diagnosis; the clinical picture of appendicitis in infancy is not mentioned.

The book lacks balance: in numerous sections the common and important conditions in differential diagnosis are either not mentioned, or are mentioned only at the end of the section: faeces follows hydrops of the gall bladder or urachal cyst as a cause of abdominal masses. There are sections on traumatic haemobilia, acute prostatitis, and the calcifying epithelioma of Malherbe, described as a 'fairly common disease'. There is a list of 64 causes of hypoglycaemia, including nesidioblastosis, but the hypoglycaemic troubles of the diabetic are not mentioned. It is remarkable that whereas at least 90% of childhood symptoms may be the side effects of drugs these are scarcely ever mentioned in differential diagnosis.

I cannot recommend this book.

CYNTHIA M. ILLINGWORTH

Shorter notices

Increased Intracranial Pressure in Children. Diagnosis and Treatment. Major Problems in Clinical Paediatrics, Volume 8. By W. E. Bell and W. F. McCormick. (Pp. 485; illustrated + tables. £21.00 hardback.) Holt-Saunders: Eastbourne. 1978.

Elegantly produced, like all the volumes in this series, and well illustrated. Straight-forward accounts of hydrocephalus, tumours, etc. Disappointingly vague on some difficult areas like the diagnosis of cerebral oedema, and whether to do a lumbar puncture in the child with suspected increased pressure.

Pediatric Neurology and Neurosurgery. Edited by R. A. Thompson and J. R. Green. (Pp. 420; illustrated + tables. £17.50 hardback.) SP Medical and Scientific: London. 1978.

Not a textbook, but a collection of reviews of some problems in this field including

prenatal diagnosis, migrainous syndrome, some aspects of convulsions including surgery for epilepsy, and rather selective brief chapters on neurosurgery of trauma and tumours. Nothing very new, and no clear indication of the intended audience.

Practical Paediatric Endocrinology. By C. G. D. Brook. (Pp. 142; illustrated + tables. £6.30.) Academic Press: London. 1978.

Although it may be difficult to see who is going to find this 'slim volume' of 129 pages just what they need, those who do read it will discover that the author's potted experience does often provide in a few simple sentences what a larger textbook takes a few pages and much circumlocution to say. At a time when medical texts tend to be painfully overblown, telling the reader more than he wants to know and at far greater length, it is something of a pleasure to find one which tells him, if anything, rather less than he would like.