Book reviews

Emergency Radiology of the Acutely Ill or Injured Child. By Leonard E Swischuk. (Pp. 496; illustrated + tables. \$49.50 hardback.) Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1979.

The author of this book is a radiologist who believes that, 'to best benefit the patient, one should treat the roentgenogram as an extension of the physical examination'. Accordingly, the main emphasis is on the evaluation of x-rays obtained of children suffering from acute conditions, commonly seen in the emergency department or outpatient clinic. There are separate chapters on the chest, upper airways, abdomen, extremities, the head, and the spine. The whole provides a catalogue of disease with illustrative x-rays. There are plenty of up-to-date references. Most conditions which are mentioned, and certainly all that are important, are illustrated by x-rays which mainly are well chosen and well reproduced. Neonatal problems are largely excluded. The text is rather uneven and occasionally turgid, as may be expected in a book which attempts to cover a very large field and includes numerous uncommon and some nonurgent conditions. The text is at its best when answering specific questions—'What to look for in acute osteomyelitis' and 'How to deal with children with head trauma'. In marked contrast is the short passage on abdominal abscesses.

To be of help to an acutely ill patient, the radiologist is required not only to interpret x-rays accurately, but also to advise on the best diagnostic imaging 'tests'. Where this approach has been applied, the book is enjoyable and useful, and I know of no competitor. The price is reasonable by today's standards and should not preclude its purchase both by radiologists and paediatricians.

C D R FLOWER

Human Milk in the Modern World. By Derrick B Jelliffe and E F Patrice Jelliffe. (Pp. 500; illustrated + tables. £7.50

paperback.) Oxford University Press: Oxford. 1979.

The charming man-and-wife team, the Jelliffes, are enthusiasts for breast feeding (using the word enthusiast in its early almost religious meaning). They have lived in many parts of the world and have seen the danger to a baby's health of contaminated other foods. The authors express their belief that 99% of mothers can feed their babies, the main reasons for failure being cleft palate in the baby or the death of the mother. They attribute difficulties in feeding to psychological inhibition of secretion and argue that total persuasion within the mother is the solution to that problem. They seek to disseminate that persuasion.

The book presents the grand view (the 'modern world' of the title) describing the likelihood of underfeeding of the mothers themselves when recently urbanised and experiencing social isolation. They rightly emphasise the fecundity which failure of breast feeding brings. What seems to be lacking in the book is the perception derived from extensive personal care of mothers. The book offers almost no help, only the implication of inadequacy, to a mother with difficulties, no mention of the risks if her baby is small (the most common cause of lactation failure), nor does it mention that even in the best of circumstances this physiological function, like others, can fail or be deceptive in its inadequacy. And in their devotion to breast feeding, the authors recommend statutory powers to enable working mothers to feed their babies. This would be very much second best, for the baby's need of every other kind of mothering from his mother in his first year is at least as great as that for breast milk. And a mother dislikes being a mere source of milk while others bring up her baby.

MAVIS GUNTHER

Manual of Pediatric Anesthesia. By David J Stewart and the staff of the Department of Anesthesia at the Hospital for Sick

Children, Toronto, Canada. (Pp. 305; tables. £9.00 paperback.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1979.

This paperback describes the anatomical and physiological differences between children and adults, gives general principles of the anaesthetic management of paediatric patients, and outlines the techniques used for specific procedures in Toronto. Each chapter has a bibliography, largely from American and Canadian sources, and includes blank pages for making personal notes. There is a useful appendix on the anaesthetic implications of unusual syndromes, and other appendices contain recommended drug dosages and data about resuscitation.

There is clearly a danger that a manual such as this, often condensing a large topic into brief notes, will have serious omissions, and it is a tribute to the clinical experience of the authors that such criticisms are relatively few. It is a pity that there is such brief coverage of neonatal physiology and of problems of neonatal anaesthesia in general, and the addition of a few photographs of commonly used equipment would be helpful. There are some controversial statements: few would agree that the piece is easily scavenged, or that a blood sugar level below 40 mg/100 ml in prematurity should necessarily be corrected. Recommended endotracheal tube lengths are too long when the standard British method of fixation is used. SI units are not given.

The information is imparted in a didactic manner, often without explanation, but is fundamentally sound. The techniques advocated are safe, and largely reflect those used in major paediatric centres throughout the world. It should be useful, particularly for those faced with an unfamiliar paediatric emergency, and I hope that its relatively cheap binding will stand the test of time. It is one of the best books so far published on the subject, but does not remove the need for a more comprehensive textbook.

DAVID HATCH