Book reviews

Management of Juvenile Diabetes Mellitus, third edition. By H S Traisman. (Pp. 348; illustrated + tables. £27.00 hardback.) Mosby: St Louis. 1980.

The first edition of this book was published in 1965. In this edition there are 22 contributors, most of whom come from Chicago, where Howard Traisman works, and 12 of the 30 chapters were written by Traisman himself. He is obviously a very nice man who genuinely cares deeply about his patients, but his view of what the average family can understand and carry out is certainly different from the average British view; evidently in the USA diabetes is managed in a very different way. For example, it is clear from the three chapters on nutrition that eating in the USA is a far more serious business than it is here. The actual dietary regimen is extremely complicated, including the prescription of carbohydrates and calories, taking account of the theoretical glucose availability from the metabolism of proteins and fats. The average diet seems to obtain 36% of its calories from carbohydrates and 42% from fats. However, there is a lighter side to food as shown in a table of 'special occasion foods' for eating at 'fast food places' including MacDonald's, Big Mac, Burger Kings, Whopper and Whopper Junior, and Kentucky Fried Chicken, extra crispy!

I received a cultural shock in the section entitled 'Emergency medical care' which begins 'Living in this nuclear age can pose serious problems for the diabetic in case of a national disaster'! I am not saying that keeping a 2-month supply of essentials for all diabetics in the air raid shelter is not a good idea—it is just different from the order of priorities that I would normally set for families with this problem.

There are some very good chapters; that on the aetiology of insulin-deficient diabetes deals clearly and concisely with the interaction of HLA tissue type and autoimmunity in the aetiology of diabetes, and the section on dental care in the diabetic child is sensitive and convincing in its outlook on the specific preventive care of teeth for diabetic children. Perhaps the best one is that by Rubenstein and Binder 'Beta cell function', which stresses

the importance of residual insulin secretion in the early clinical course of the disease and I would recommend it as worthwhile reading to any member of a clinical team caring for children with diabetes.

This long book is not a handbook for practitioners; although it is detailed in parts, other important practical sections are vague and theoretical. Its main asset is that it illustrates the need for involving the services of many disciplines in the care of children with diabetes. Each chapter is extensively referenced and I found no typographical errors. However, I do not think it offers much to the British physician or nurse.

J D BAUM

Modern Management of Mental Handicap. A Manual of Practice. Edited by G B Simon. (Pp. 309; tables. £9.95 hardback.) MTP Press: Lancaster. 1980.

This is intended for parents and professionals concerned with the mentally handicapped throughout the entire age range. Some selection of topics was necessary and the result is a well-edited book comprising 18 chapters each by a different author, with only an occasional overlap of subject matter (for example, discussion of drugs in use for psychiatric problems). It is difficult to cater for such a wide readership, and I think the book is more suitable for paramedical professional staff working with the mentally handicapped than for parents.

There are particularly good chapters by Walker on communication, and A and M Craft on sexuality. In the former the emphasis is on the practical applications and anyone could immediately adopt the diagnostic and therapeutic approach so clearly described. In the chapter on motor handicap perhaps the aims of treatment of severe handicap—correct positioning, promotion of learning, and prevention of deformity—could have been more clearly stated, particularly the last one, as a visit to any large subnormality hospital will show. In the sensory handicap section a brief description of the Stycar vision tests and distraction and conditioning approach to hearing tests which are often applicable to the mentally handicapped would have been helpful. Further chapters on the

management of the much younger handicapped child and home intervention projects would have been useful and have given an opportunity to emphasise the community and home basis for resource and therapy which will be the manner in which the mentally handicapped will be managed in the future.

GILLIAN BAIRD

Neonatal Neurology. Clinical Neurology and Neurosurgery Monographs. Vol. 2. By G M Fenichel. (Pp. 270; illustrated + tables. £14.00 hardback.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1980.

A book on neonatal neurology is welcome because this is a subject which is appreciated both by neonatologists and neurologists, but it is inevitable that it will be compared with some of the excellent volumes on neurology in the series *Major Problems in Clinical Paediatrics*. However it reflects the American system whereby a neurologist visits the neonatal unit rather than the British system whereby the paediatric neurologist is a trained paediatrician.

The first chapter, which discusses neonatal consultation, is inadequate because it does not give sufficient detail about the basis of the neurological examination, and in places it is inaccurate. The chapter on fits is well done and steers a difficult course through recommendations for treatment, but neonatal pharmacology is hardly mentioned. The section on asphyxia has a heavy bias towards the work of Myers, and more illustration of human neuro-pathology would have been welcome. The chapter on the 'floppy' infant reflects the author's own work and is excellent, being by far the best in the book, but it demonstrates the imbalance likely to creep into single-author books in that neonatal botulism is allotted almost as much space as the management of bacterial meningitis. Next there are chapters on metabolic disease, congenital malformation, and infection. I should have liked more about the practical details of management. None of the current topical thorny problems encountered in British neonatal neurology circles—such as the management of intraventricular haemorrhage, the place

for pressure monitoring, the measurement of cerebral blood flow and the relationship of this to diplegia of prematurity, or the arguments relating to nutritional encephalopathy—is discussed in detail. Subjects not considered are: Perinatal strokes and their possible relationship to placental embolisation or polycythaemia. Should we plasma-exchange hyperviscous neonates? Barbiturates and the limitation of asphyxial brain damage.

But despite its shortcomings this book is easy to read and well presented, and much of the vast amount of information has not previously been collected and published in the same volume. I recommend it to all paediatricians and paediatric neurologists.

J K BROWN

Pediatric Ultrasound. By J O Haller and M Schneider. (Pp. 279; illustrated + tables. £33.25 hardback.) Year Book Medical Publishers: London. 1980.

This is the third book devoted to this subject. It contains 279 pages and has 209 figures, many of which are composites of several illustrations. The authors, and the majority of the references, are North American which inevitably gives a very North American bias. Echocardiography and neonatal echoencephalography are not included but the abdomen, pelvis, and testes are covered comprehensively and there is an interesting section on the use of ultrasound in chest disorders.

A study of the references reveals the relative infancy of the subject; most of them originate in adult ultrasound practice. Fortunately the authors' personal experience is obvious in the text and amply compensates for this general lack of published data. There are some mistakes, and one that cannot pass without comment

is the statement that the size of the normal neonatal adrenal is one-third of that of the kidney; not even in Texas can this be correct!

Some of the illustrations are accompanied by explanatory drawings which should be very useful in helping clinicians to understand what most of them think is a mysterious method of investigation. Unfortunately for readers in the UK many of the illustrations are white on black as distinct from the standard black on white presentation to which they are accustomed, and this is confusing to anyone not used to having to understand images in both negative and positive forms. The images lose some of their value because of a surprisingly poor standard of reproduction. The bad illustrations coupled with the price of this book may discourage interest in it which would be regrettable because the text is well worth reading. It covers the subject extremely well and would undoubtedly aid clinicians who were in doubt about the use of ultrasound in a particular clinical problem.

C METREWELI

Studies in Perinatal Physiology. Edited by E M Widdowson. (Pp. 186; illustrated + tables. £20.00 hardback.) Pitman Medical: Tunbridge Wells. 1980.

McCance and Widdowson—the words roll off the tongue as naturally as eggs-and-bacon or gin-and-french, and with the same implication that each of the pair perfectly complements and enhances the quality of the other. Their long and productive partnership goes back to 1933, and as a variant of the many McCance and Widdowson publications this particular volume could well be described as *by Widdowson for McCance*.

In 1979 the Neonatal Society held a special meeting in Cambridge to mark Robert McCance's 80th birthday. A number of happy coincidences made the occasion especially felicitous; the Neonatal Society had been founded 20 years before Mac had been its first president, and Elsie Widdowson was now the current president. The first part of this volume is made up of the papers read at the meeting by G S Dawes, M Purves, Pauline Alexander, R D G Milner, and B A Wharton. The second part consists of 21 facsimile reprints of McCance's publications covering the years 1941–76, and beginning with the observation that there are important differences in renal function between the newborn and adult. This observation proved to be seminal, for it directed the attention of everybody concerned to the need to work out the normal physiology of the infant, unique as it is in so many ways. Until this was done, paediatricians lacked a firm base from which to practise medicine in this age group.

Perusal of these publications will impress the reader with the beautiful clarity of Mac's writing. He possesses an enviable ability to make the reader feel that he is following an exciting story of discovery. Elsie Widdowson herself provides a delightful account of the earlier part of Mac's career and of some of his co-workers, notably Winifred Young who played an important part in the story until her sadly early death, and with whose brother Mac had trained to fly with the Royal Navy Air Service in the 1914–8 war. The only thing lacking is any mention by Elsie Widdowson of her own role in the famous partnership, a story still to be told some day.

DOUGLAS GAIRDNER