Book reviews

The Dying Child. The Management of the Child or Adolescent who is Dying, second edition. By W M Easson. (Pp. 115: table. \$11.75 soft cover.) Thomas: Springfield. 1981.

This is the second edition of an already well-known book written for anyone who comes into contact with dying children and their families—whether physician, nurse, clergy, ward orderly, or friend. The emphasis throughout is on the dying patient. Aspects of management are related to the stage of development reached by the dying child in his understanding of the world and of death in particular. The author explains the maturing concepts of death in the pre-school child, schoolchildren, and in the adolescent and how such concepts to some extent, dictate the way in which a child behaves.

There are two excellent chapters on the family and on the staff who look after the child, and a timely reminder to all staff that they too are going to be severely affected, and that their behaviour will be noted by family and patient. The details of a child's reaction to his illness and impending death are discussed in great depth with a wisdom and sensitivity that must stem from many years of experience.

There are differences in practice on either side of the Atlantic. In the USA it is commonplace for a child to be told exactly what his illness is. Here it is unlikely that a 3-year-old child will say 'Mummy I've got leukaemia and a new dress'. The financial burden of a prolonged, ultimately fatal illness occurs to a very much lesser extent in this country.

A book on this subject should be available in all paediatric departments and this one is well written and a pleasure to read. It is an authoritative statement on a difficult aspect of paediatric care and as such is highly recommended.

P R H BARBOR

Haemophilia Home Therapy. Edited by Peter Jones. (Pp. 238; illustrated + tables. £12.95 hardback.) Pitman Medical: London. 1981.

The editor of this book is the director of the Newcastle haemophilia centre and chairman of the UK centre directors' working party on home therapy. His prize-winning monograph for patients and parents on living with haemophilia was a model of its kind; therefore I expected much from this book which aims to provide a working model of a home therapy programme for doctors concerned with haemophiliac patients. It is produced by a team whose individual contributions are not identified.

The scope is wider than the title implies and covers many aspects of care of the haemophiliac in the era of home therapy including subjects as diverse as physiotherapy after hip replacement, choice of method of termination of pregnancy, and how to appeal against refusal of a mobility allowance. However there are some major omissions; this may have been intentional but had they been included the book would have been better. The non-specialist will have to use this book as an adjunct to standard texts for there is no mention of physiology of basic haemostasis or of diagnostic techniques; this is understandable but in a book about total care, surely genetic counselling, carrier detection, and antenatal diagnosis rate a chapter to themselves rather than an addendum to a chapter on obstetrics and gynaecology. There is barely a mention of Christmas disease or von Willebrand's disease.

The topics covered are divided into three sections. The first on home, family, and educational background is full and good, although somewhat discursive; many of the comments would be of interest to those involved with families with any chronic disease. In contrast the second section on techniques of therapy is extremely detailed. The third section on

back-up facilities deals with clinic organisation, dental care, physiotherapy, and surgery.

The book provides an enjoyable and full account of how they do it in Newcastle and workers in most haemophilia centres (even if their method is different) will want a copy. I recommend this to nurses and social workers as well as to the doctors for whom it was intended.

JUDITH M CHESSELL

Neonatal Anaesthesia. By D J Hatch and E Sumner. No 5 in Current Topics in Anaesthesia Series. General Editors S A Feldman and C F Scurr. (Pp. 207; illustrated + tables. £14.95 hardback.) Arnold: London. 1981.

During the last 2 years several useful books on paediatric anaesthesia have been published but very little information on neonatal anaesthesia has been included; therefore the authors are to be congratulated on writing an excellent book which fulfils this need. It is informative, interesting, easy to digest, and is largely based on the practice of anaesthesia at The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. Subjects covered include perinatal physiology, the surgical problems of the neonate, and resuscitation. No attempt has been made to cover the special problems of neonatal intensive care; instead the authors have concentrated on the basic problems which occur after operation, and specific surgical problems and diseases are described as well as the basic principles of neonatal anaesthesia. The illustrations are exceptionally good.

I highly recommend this book; it will be valuable to all anaesthetists who wish to improve their understanding of this complex and important aspect of paediatric anaesthesia.

A P ADAMS