Book reviews

Butterworths International Medical Reviews: Pediatrics. Vol. 1. Hematology and Oncology. Edited By M Willoughby and S Siegel. Pp. 306: £15.00 hardback. London: Butterworth, 1982.

This is the first of a new series of paediatric monographs which succeeds the postgraduate paediatric series published by Butterworths, of which the late John Apley was editor. For this series Butterworths have enrolled different editors for each book and have tried to share the editorial tasks between a UK and a USA editor.

It is a comparatively small, moderately priced book for which the editors have chosen 13 topics, each dealt with by a different author, most of whom are from the USA. It is intended for general paediatricians and the choice of subjects is sensible. The level of information is also well judged giving either a guide to current best management or some insight into exciting and important trends. The controversial practical aspects are dealt with firmly and usefully; thus in the chapter on thrombocytopenic purpura, clear advice is given about when and how to use corticosteroids. However, the brevity of the chapters means that they cannot be regarded as authoritative; a paediatrician confronted with a child who has haemophilia will require more knowledge than is available in the chapter on 'Home therapy and haemophilia'; and the trainee taking a postgraduate examination will require more information than is available in the relevant chapter. The book should not be considered as a paediatric haematology and oncology reference book, but rather as a guide to recent trends.

Bearing in mind its limited size and scope the space used for reference lists is extraordinary; one chapter comprising 20 pages of text is followed by 15 pages of references. Another brief chapter has 315 references, all given in full Vancouver style and printed in a type large enough to make a presbyopic paediatrician purr.

ROY MEADOW

The Development of Vision. By P A Gardiner. Studies in Developmental Paediatrics Series. Vol. 3. Pp. 141: £11.95 hardback. London: MTP Press, 1982.

This third book in a series edited by

Margaret Pollack is compact, readable, and practical. Topics dealt with in the text include the morphological and physiological development of the visual system; the development of visual behaviour in the young child coupled with descriptions of the techniques available to the clinician for the assessment of vision; the principles governing optics and refraction, the importance of strabismus within the context of paediatric practice; models of ophthalmic services for children and the special visual needs of handicapped children.

Peter Gardiner is to be congratulated on his authorship, particularly in the way he expresses complicated technical principles in simple uncluttered English. The sections on optics, refraction, and squints will be especially valuable to the primary care physician, and give him sufficient working knowledge to make selective referral to specialist colleagues correctly.

Severe visual disability is only briefly referred to and although the book did not set out to detail the embryological, genetic, and paediatric facets of congenital visual handicap, a section emphasising that there are important overtones in these areas in most forms would have been valuable. It would have been helpful to have had a description of symptoms and signs to watch for in babies and young children.

Although the book is well indexed and referenced the lack of reference to much of the more recent research on early infant vision is a pity.

This is an excellent little book which will find a useful place on the shelves of paediatric libraries as well as of doctors and people in other disciplines working in child care and development, and it should certainly be on the book list for courses in child development.

PATRICIA M SONKSEN

Parent-Infant Bonding, second edition. By M H Klaus and J H Kennell. Pp. 314: £13.50 hardback. St Louis: Mosby, 1982.

The first edition of Klaus and Kennell's delightful book on understanding mother-infant relationships has been obligatory reading for obstetricians, paediatricians, and midwives for the last 6 years.

With the gradual introduction of open visiting to wards and intensive care units,

parent support groups, counselling clinics for the bereaved, and Polaroid photographs for separated mothers, many will feel that we have come a long way (or even done enough) in humanising the more institutional side of hospital delivery and baby care.

This second edition reminds us that we still have a long way to go. Its scope and length is widened by including the problems of fathers and siblings and those of medical and nursing staff exposed to repeated stress in neonatal intensive care units. The evangelical framework of the earlier book has been filled out and supported by new and usually scientific data on the beneficial effects of the liberal and interventionist methods they advocate.

The style and approach of the book is North American in detail, but the principles presented are universally useful. An increased number of contributors is matched by an even greater number of 'critical commentators' whose sometimes pithy interjections make the book more enjoyable. However, the less experienced reader might find the conflicting opinions sometimes confusing. The original commentators were mainly paediatricians but alternative birth enthusiasts and a token analyst have joined the panel for this edition.

It is a book for enthusiasts. Depending on your preconceptions in the field you will embrace it or reject it, but do read it!

RICHARD COOKE

Paediatric Pathology. Edited by C L Berry. Pp. 697: DM 170, \$72.40 hardback. Berlin: Springer, 1981.

A new text on paediatric pathology is a rare occurrence and this addition to the field by Professor Colin Berry and 11 other contributors deserves a warm welcome. Its roots can be traced to the Department of Pathology at The Hospital for Sick Children, London, where 5 of the authors trained; two-thirds of the contributors are from London medical schools.

The first three chapters cover examination of the fetus, placental and abortion pathology, and congenital malformations. The final chapter provides a concise