Book reviews

Hematologic Problems in the Newborn, third edition. Major Problems in Clinical Pediatrics Volume IV. By F L Oski and J L Naiman. Pp 360: £29.75 hardback. Philadelphia: Saunders, 1982.

'As a compendium of facts and a source of references to the literature this book could be useful!' So reads the rather faint praise in the review of the second edition of *Hematologic problems in the newborn* a decade ago in the *Archives of Disease in Childhood*. The passage of time has certainly proved this prediction to be true, though, and the book has become the standard text on neonatal haematology.

The main changes in this, the third edition, are in content and layout, rather than in length. Two new authors join Professors Oski and Naiman for the sections on leucocyte and haemoglobin disorders, and the style is now double columned with references after each chapter rather than all at the end. Text revision is extensive, and emphasis has shifted in several areas. There are, for instance, greatly expanded sections on polycythaemia and hyperviscosity, and the anaemia of prematurity. Maternal plasma-pheresis to alleviate haemolytic disease is included for the first time, and the chapter on thrombocytopenia has become 'Disorders of the platelets' due to the addition of thrombocytosis and platelet function.

Despite occasional luxurious excursions into irrelevance (bilobed neutrophils are apparently especially common in rabbits) the book keeps to its title subject and is still a very manageable size. To achieve this it inevitably presupposes some background knowledge of the two specialties which it bridges at times, and the neonatologist will not find this the best source to learn about, say, Von Willebrand's disease, any more than the haematologist will about the respiratory distress syndrome.

There are few other shortcomings in this well produced volume. Its success can be confidently predicted, and it will be found on wards and in offices, as well as in libraries.

J S LILLEYMAN

Telephone Manual of Pediatric Care. By H P Katz. Pp 184: £16.20 hardback. Chichester: John Wiley, 1982.

Dr Katz is Associated Professor of Pediatrics at John Hopkins Hospital. His book is written for north America where the doctor's telephone hour is an established mode of seeking and giving advice. It is a training manual for lay-people who answer telephones when the doctor is elsewhere, or is busy, helping them to assign priorities to requests for appointments, and giving them knowledge to enable them to advise parents whether their child needs to see the doctor.

This 'telephone assistant' is taught to take a history of the complaint, with birth details or family history when appropriate, and learns the importance of infections, such as chicken pox in children receiving anti-cancer chemotherapy. From a study of 2520 telephone calls made in a 4 week period, the author has made a list of the most common acute complaints that cause parents to seek immediate contact with the doctor. Most of the book is taken up with the consideration of these conditions. Much of the information is given in the form of check lists of questions to be asked about a particular problem, with guidance as to whether or not the child should see the doctor immediately. Eighteen topics including fever, colds and earache, sore throat, cough and wheezing, croup, poisoning, and strains, are covered in this manner. The book is easy to read, and is written in an admirably clear and concise style.

Although primary paediatric care is organised differently in this country, in some surgeries and health centres receptionists do sort our requests for appointments and allocate priorities, and to do so safely they require training. This book would be a useful basis for such instruction.

KEN SIMPSON

Clinical Paediatric Haematology & Oncology. Edited by H Ekert. Pp 245: £22.50 hardback. Oxford: Blackwell, 1982.

This is a synopsis of the practice of clinical haematology and oncology as it occurs in

a specialised unit in a children's hospital. It is written for junior medical staff and members of allied professions in a concise clear form with suggestions for further reading rather than references. Should we keep it next to the protocol book to help the house officers on rotation to the ward?

As expected in a book from this editor, the section on bleeding disorders is excellent and written at just the right level. I looked in vain for a chapter on neonatal anaemia, although there is a section on haemolytic disease of the newborn (incorrectly cross referenced). Management of the thalassaemias is covered better than sickle cell disease—no mention of susceptibility to pneumococcal infection. The house officers spend a lot of time ordering and using blood products and a short chapter on this would be a welcome addition.

The practice of oncology is reviewed in a series of disease orientated chapters with most emphasis on the common tumours. Yet, the house officer spends much of his time dealing with complications of therapy or infections; chicken pox, measles, and pneumocystis are merely mentioned in a table and I looked in vain for advice on emergencies such as respiratory obstruction or spinal cord compression. A lot of time is spent worrying about psychological problems, which are tucked into the chapter on leukaemia. Last but not least he should think about the late effects of treatment.

The editors have performed no mean feat in compressing so much information into 240 pages, but I hope the next edition will combine more of the general principles and less of the particular remedies. In a rapidly changing field it seems inadvisable to give specific treatment schedules. These are better left to the protocol book, to which this work should be a companion.

JUDITH CHESSELLS

Psychobiology of the Human Newborn. Edited by P Stratton. Pp 456: £24.95 hardback. Chichester: John Wiley, 1982.

Although written primarily for developmental psychologists, this book has much

to offer the paediatrician brave enough to read further than the title. Dr Stratton has tried more or less successfully to draw together neonatal neurology, obstetrics, paediatrics, and developmental psychology, through their common interest in the normal and abnormal newborn. His aim is to persuade researchers and practitioners that it is futile and unproductive to attempt to deal with any aspect of the newborn in isolation. He also argues that the characteristics of the newborn must be considered in relation to both present and future needs.

The book is divided into 4 sections the first of which discusses behavioural and neurological assessment of the newborn with contributions from Drs Precht and Amiel-Tison. The second section reviews extensively the experimental and other evidence of the capacity of the newborn to perceive and to learn from his environment. A chapter on the development of the nervous system and another on the newborn as an individual are also included. A third part reviews the evidence for prenatal influences on the newborn, together with an account of obstetric practices in various cultures and of neonatal intensive care in our own. The final section contains a chapter on the infant and the social world which to a simple paediatrician consists mostly of impenetrable jargon—'operant learning represents a cross modal integration of kinaesthetic interoceptive and exteroceptive modalities'—after which Dr Stratton wraps the subject up in a final chapter. All in all a challenging read for the ambitious paediatrician prepared to step out from his own small world for a while.

R W I COOKE

Annual Review of Birth Defects 1981:

Part A: Prenatal Diagnosis & Mechanisms of Teratogenesis. Part B: Dysmorphology. By W L Nyhan and Lyons Jones. Part A Pp 232, Part B Pp 350: Part A £29.00, Part B £43.00 hardback. New York: Alan R Liss, 1982.

The Birth Defects series got off to a good start reviewing birth defects in a detailed and logical fashion, and the early books (Volume 5, Number 1 to Volume 10, Number 4) were an enormous contribution, for they constituted an excellent up to date source of information on

syndromes (to the almost complete neglect of common single malformations).

Now, unless one owns or has access to the entire set (over 100 volumes), single volumes are of very little use. These 2 are recent additions to the series, and comprise either single case reports, small studies, or brief reviews, and most of the papers cover rarities. Part A is in 3 sections; 11 papers on Mechanisms of Abnormal Morphogenesis (eg case report of congenital tick borne relapsing fever with transplacental transmission; mid-line facial defect as a teratogenic effect of metronidazole; calcium and neural tube defects); 10 papers on Prenatal Diagnosis (including a good short review of the effectiveness of prenatal screening by Brock, and an interesting report of 3 cases of fetal oedema in trisomy 18); and 3 papers on Perinatology (on the significance of meconium staining of fluid obtained at amniocentesis, the complications of maternal terbutaline and ritodrine, and a comparison of transporting babies 'in utero' or after delivery). Part B is in two sections—32 papers on Syndromes and 7 papers on Cytogenetics. The syndromes covered vary from the rare but important, eg the Meckel syndrome, to the newly described, such as the second recorded case of the Pilotto syndrome.

The quality of the papers in both volumes is patchy, though Part B in particular does contain some very good and interesting case reports. The books are far too specialised, however, for the average paediatrician without a very special interest in dysmorphology. Single volumes are not worth buying because they merely constitute a somewhat random assortment of papers, and only libraries or individuals collecting the series will want to purchase these books.

T J DAVID

Shorter notices

Core Textbook of Paediatrics, Second edition. By R Kay, F Oski, and L Barness. Pp 542: £16.95 paperback. London: Harper & Row, 1982.

This is an attempt to provide an introduction to paediatrics for the undergraduate, but it compares unfavourably with the current British texts. The subject

balance and emphasis is strange; for example 7 pages on chronic constipation with unnecessary and speculative detail, compared with a short paragraph on minimal change nephrotic syndrome. The plethora of useful lists may attract the few, but many will be deterred by the transatlantic differences; for example social services organisation in child abuse and neglect, the availability of drugs and vaccines, and the pattern of disease (who has seen a Black Widow spider recently?)

Sleep Management Manual. By J Douglas and N Richman. Pp 25: £1.00. Available from the authors, 1982.

Each time I see a child with a sleep disorder I experience a sense of foreboding. I have always taken seriously the restless unsettled baby, knowing how extensive the effects can be on the parent and the family.

We all have our own empiric and pragmatic ways of dealing with the problem but I never feel very hopeful. Now, from the Department of Psychological Medicine at the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond St., comes this manual. The authors are to be complimented on tackling this difficult problem so realistically, in such depth, and for providing a 'vade-mecum' for the clinician. In less than 25 pages, including three relevant case-histories, the subject is comprehensively tackled and the guidelines should give us renewed confidence in handling this difficult clinical situation.

Topics in Gastroenterology 10. By D Jewel and W Selby. Pp 337: £20.00 hardback. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific publications, 1982.

This book, based on the postgraduate gastroenterology course held in Oxford each year, is celebrating its tenth anniversary. The contents are mainly directed at adult physicians, but this year there are four interesting chapters for the paediatrician. These are on cows' milk intolerance, hepatobiliary disorders in infancy, neonatal necrotising enterocolitis and gastrointestinal bleeding in childhood. Each one has been well written and deserves a wider paediatric readership than it would otherwise obtain in this excellent publication.