Book reviews

Chemical Pathology and the Sick Child. Edited by B E Clayton and J M Round. Pp 595: £32.50 hardback. Blackwell Scientific, 1984.

Paediatricians, always alert to the limited tolerance and blood volumes of their patients, are especially dependent upon a harmonious, effective relationship with colleagues in chemical pathology. Professor Clayton and Dr Round have produced a valuable book which fosters this liaison by providing clear guidance in the interface between clinical paediatricians and the ever expanding repertoire of biochemical investigation. Their selection of expert contributors spans the main subspecialty area, and reflects a successful integration of clinician and laboratory scientist.

The contents cover the full range of paediatrics; from the care of the low birthweight infant through systemic, endocrine, and metabolic areas to such specialised fields as the lipid disorders and the use of protein assays. Most chapters provide a brief review of clinical aspects before considering relevant biochemistry and the selection of appropriate investigations. The technical aspects are kept to a level which will appeal to a general paediatric readership. The newborn section makes effective use of the problem orientated approach and includes an unrivalled selection of tables giving reference ranges. The chapter dealing with the diagnosis of the mentally subnormal child provides a useful system for linking clinical signs to an appropriate investigative pathway. Some chapters, for example those on growth and diabetes, follow the pattern of conventional clinical textbooks but are nevertheless good reviews and will be useful to the laboratory based doctor who wishes to keep abreast of current practice. For a book which is otherwise so up to date, I would question the absence of the clonidine provocation test of growth hormone release.

There is an enormous amount of information packed into this medium sized book. Some of the pages will have to be read several times over but the effort will usually be well rewarded. As a short cut there is an abundance of subheadings, tables, and lists. The reader will certainly discover the relative value and reliability of tests ranging from the humble, but not

always straightforward, bilirubin concentration to those which are complex, expensive, and remote.

I am convinced that this book deserves a place alongside Forfar and Arneil or Nelson on the departmental bookshelf. Hopefully the goodwill and financial savings generated in the chemical pathology laboratory will induce them to buy their own copy!

DEREK JOHNSTON

Coping with Young Children. By J Douglas and N Richman. Pp 138: £1.75 paperback. Penguin Books, 1984.

This short inexpensive publication is refreshing in its direct down to earth approach to most of the common behavioural difficulties of preschool children. Few mothers will read this book without recognising their own child in some form. The authors deal with a wide range of topics including temper tantrums, breath holding attacks, sleeping difficulties, masturbation, and sibling rivalry. The format followed is one of a description of the particular problem, often illustrated by a short clinical case description. Practical and clear advice on management is then given—for example parents are advised to buy coats rather than all in one snow suits if attempting to toilet train their child in winter, on the grounds of faster access in emergencies! Examples of charts and diaries suitable for use with behaviour modification techniques are included.

The book comprises 138 pages and the discussion on individual topics is therefore brief. Particularly common problems such as headbanging, hyperactivity, and toilet training difficulties are referenced at the end and there is also an index.

This excellent publication will certainly find favour with parents but will also be useful for health visitors, nursery staff, and allied professionals.

K N PEARL

The Clinical Pathology of Pregnancy and the Newborn Infant. Edited by M N Cauchi, G L Gilbert, and J B Brown. Pp 373: £32.50 hardback. Edward Arnold, 1984.

The development of modern perinatal care

during the last two decades has been greatly helped by the rapid progress of clinical pathology. This book has very successfully brought together information on a multitude of pathological tests and diagnostic procedures, used by both obstetrician and neonatal paediatrician, which is normally found scattered through the appendices of numerous textbooks. It is, however, more than just a giant perinatal appendix in that crisp explanatory chapters accompany the facts and data.

The book begins with a section on the physiology of the pregnant woman and the newborn which usefully describes how functional and metabolic differences in pregnancy and the neonatal period may profoundly alter the interpretation of pathological tests and data. Following sections on the endocrinology of pregnancy and antenatal diagnosis there is a series of paired chapters on anaemia, coagulation disorders, and infections in mothers and newborn. The biochemistry of the newborn and haemolytic disease are comprehensively covered. Remaining chapters include a good review of perinatal immunology and the enigma of pre-eclampsia.

In style it combines the best of both British and American texts, but hails from Australia. It can be referred to briefly to find a normal value or suitable test, or read as a textbook. It is a must for every serious perinatologist and has already found a prominent place in our own intensive care unit.

R COOKE

Principles of Paediatric Pharmacology. By G M Maxwell. Pp 407: £22.50 hardback. Croom Helm, 1984.

This book is one of a number on the subject of paediatric pharmacology which we may expect to see published in the next few years. My forecast, based on some 'inside' information, has more than an even chance of proving correct. The subject remains somewhat in its infancy; our profession is realising at last that children are not 'little adults' in relation to drug treatment any more than in relation to disease problems and prevention; and publishing houses are ever keen to probe potentially rewarding market areas. Whether this book meets the needs of practising