Book reviews

Cardiovascular Problems in Paediatric Critical Care. Edited by David W Swedlow and Russell C Raphaely. Pp 311: £35.00 hardback. Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

The objective of this book is to give a comprehensive overview of current aspects of cardiovascular physiology as required by those concerned with paediatric intensive care and to deal in some detail with all aspects of investigation and management of cardiovascular problems as they present in the intensive care unit. This volume is clearly written from the point of view of specialist intensive therapists and is aimed chiefly at those who are training in that field of paediatric care. It would seem to be aimed largely at the American market and much of its content is heavily biased towards North American practice.

The general concept of this monograph is sound and might be expected to have wide appeal to paediatricians, paediatric surgeons, and paediatric anaesthetists who are concerned with intensive care, but in practice the book is unbalanced and probably of rather limited value to a high proportion of its potential readership. The initial section on cardiovascular physiology is lengthy and makes heavy reading, but it does include a wealth of information on most aspects of cardiovascular physiology and is very heavily referenced (more than 450 references for this chapter alone).

Two chapters on investigation follow: the first of these (non-invasive tests) provides a detailed account of echocardiography as it relates to assessment of ventricular function and pulmonary artery pressure, radionuclide imaging, and Doppler assessment of cardiac output. There is a brief mention of computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging (currently of doubtful relevance in the intensive care unit environment). The chapter on invasive assessment discusses a variety of arterial and venous cannulation sites and methods plus details of pressure monitoring and cardiac output measurement by dye dilution, thermodilution, etc. Systemic and pulmonary resistance calculations are also discussed briefly. A further fairly large and heavily referenced chapter relates to anaesthetic considerations of cardiac patients and is aimed specifically at those involved in cardiac anaesthesia and post-operative care.

The remaining one third of the book covers treatment. A chapter on 'preload manipulation' repeats a great deal of the information contained in the first chapter on cardiovascular physiology and actual discussion of treatment is limited to two pages. A brief chapter dealing with 'after-load manipulation' largely comprises a series of dose regimes of different vasodilators. Again the chapter on 'contractility' repeats much of the physiology and gives limited practical information about inotropic drugs (all with American names). The final two chapters on heart rate and rhythm and cardiopulmonary resuscitation are both of rather limited value. Arrhythmias are dealt with superficially and anti-arrhythmic drugs are limited to those currently available in the United States (neither amiodarone nor flecainide get a mention).

All in all this is a rather disappointing and unbalanced book that will not be of value as a manual on cardiovascular aspects of intensive care; the sections on cardiovascular physiology and non-invasive investigation, however, do contain much useful information and may prove a valuable source of reference. For this reason, and in view of the relatively low price by current standards, the book should find a place in the libraries of institutions with a paediatric intensive care unit. Being orientated largely towards older children and infants (beyond the neonatal period), however, it is less likely that this volume will prove useful to those concerned specifically with neonatal intensive care.

J L WILKINSON

Breasts, Bottles and Babies. By Valerie Fildes. Pp. 462: £19.75 hardback. Edinburgh University Press, 1986.

This is an excellent reference book and source material for anyone interested in the history of infant feeding and the folklore surrounding it. The main part of the book comprises the author's PhD thesis on infant feeding between 1500 and 1800—from the beginning of printed books to the end of the pre-industrial period. Her review is world wide but concentrates principally on Europe and, of course, the United Kingdom. The significant changes in the relations between doctors, midwives,

and the public on the views and advice given on infant feeding are well recorded. At a time when paediatricians and midwives are promoting breast feeding it is as well to remember that it was sometimes regarded as being only suitable for 'wet nurses' and those of a lower station. The most remarkable pioneers in changing this attitude were those upper class mothers who were prepared to break this convention and work at the founding hospitals in this country. The first part of the book shows some signs of having been added on in order to make the book more comprehensive. Nevertheless, the views of antiquity and the medieval period towards infant feeding are elegantly expressed.

Throughout the book there are excellent references and reproductions in black and white of pictures and line drawings of original feeding vessels and paintings all concerned with infant feeding. This could be sheer delight to the art historian, and would certainly complement the excellent collection that the late Ronald Mackenzie assembled about the art of infant feeding. It would be pleasing to think that such a text book was available at any district general hospital, however, the price and the somewhat epigrammatic title might put off a serious reader.

C H NOUSE

Advances in Pediatric Infectious Diseases. Volume 2. Editor in Chief S C Aronoff. Pp 192: £21.50 hardback. Year Book Medical Publishers, 1987.

In this second volume of a series directed at general paediatricians the editors have chosen eight subjects of current interest for review. The range is broad, but there is welcome coordination of several contributions. The target of topicality is hit straight away in the first chapter. Protection of young children against invasive infections caused by *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) is a new public health goal, and immunisation regimes using various different modifications of capsular antigen are currently being used or considered for use in the United States and Europe. In their chapter on the epidemiology and immunology of infections with Hib, Hetherington and Lepow provide the essential basis for evaluating such strategies.

With more and more use of nursery facilities for small children there is growing concern about a possible increase in serious infections, from Hib meningitis to hepatitis. The second chapter, *Infections in Day-Care Centres*, complements the epidemiological part of the first, and gives a useful summary of what we do and do not know about the risks involved and what can be done to minimise them.

Two scholarly reviews—of antiviral treatment and of perinatal enteroviral infections—are followed by four articles taking a practical approach to the subjects they cover. There are reviews of the management of pulmonary infections in the immunocompromised child, of childhood tuberculosis, and of urinary tract infections. This last, while usefully practical in microbiological matters and commendably free of dogma in discussion of the management of reflux, disappointingly omits any appraisal of different imaging techniques and their different indications in practice. Finally, Sixby's chapter, *Routine Immunisations and the Immunosuppressed Child*, is a *tour de force*. Extensively referenced, to 203 sources, this is a highly readable and very useful summary of important information for all those helping to care for these children.

As part of an add-on series keeping infectious diseases in the forefront of paediatricians' minds, this collection well deserves the attention of the wide audience to whom it is addressed.

J S KROLL

Respiratory and Alimentary Tract Diseases. Edited by H S Rosenberg and J Bernstein. Pp 218: £100 hardback. Karger, 1987.

Some books give the impression that they have been organised in the spirit of a dinner party whereby the conversation is a product of those who attend rather than the reason for their invitation. This book is volume 11 in a series entitled *Perspectives in Pediatric Pathology*. It begins with a short tribute to that Edinburgh pioneer of the discipline Dr Agnes Macgregor by her successor Dr Douglas Bain; they are now both sadly deceased. The reviews that follow are of very diverse appeal. Dr Robertson gives a good account of the experimental background of neonatal surfactant deficiency and there is a comprehensive review by Dr Cutz on pulmonary haemosiderosis. Dr Landing and his co-

workers contribute two chapters. The first is an account of the pulmonary lesions in 14 children with thalassaemia major that would more appropriately have been published in a journal. The second has no pretensions to being a pathological treatise as it is devoted to the normal anatomy of the myenteric plexus as shown by flat mount preparations. There are two chapters related to the oesophagus: one on mucosal biopsies and the other on the pathophysiology of reflux and oesophagitis. The book concludes with a review of Indian childhood cirrhosis and a form of megacolon indigenous to the African Bantu.

Paediatric pathology has become too large and complex a field for any kind of perspective to be gained into two organ systems in so slim a volume. The book lacks cohesion and the authors would have been far better selecting eight reviews on a more well defined area like the childhood liver, large intestine, or the neonatal lung. It is a book best seen in the context of the series and as such is more an acquisition for the reference library than the individual.

A J BARSON

Decision Making in Child Neurology. By D W Dunn and L G Epstein. Pp 217: £41.50 hardback. B C Decker Inc, 1987.

The authors of this book state clearly in the preface that they see the work as a practical guide for the paediatrician who is dealing with a wide range of neurological problems; the aim is to give a guide to paediatric neurological thinking. They also state that it should be useful for revision and in preparing lectures.

The book is part of a much larger series with a similar format, which comprises two pages for each subject. On the right hand page there is an algorithm to guide the reader through making a decision; on the opposite page is an expanded set of notes. A variety of clinical problems are covered; specific diagnoses—for example, meningitis; presenting features—for example, acute ataxia; and practical problems—for example, brain death. Some subjects lend themselves better than others to this format and often the algorithm does not add a great deal to the notes which are in general concise and well thought out, up to date and practical, though of necessity somewhat didactic.

One might quibble with some aspects of drug treatment and recommendations, but

I suppose the excessive use of phenobarbitone just reflects North American usage. There is also a tendency to suggest investigation of neurological disease rather more extensively and earlier than we would in the United Kingdom.

The book is up to date and well referenced. It gives a practical, concise guide to the diagnosis and management of a wide range of subjects including most of the common problems in child neurology, and some that are less commonly seen by the average paediatrician—for example nystagmus or acute vascular problems. It is not so much a book to read for an in depth assessment of a particular problem, but I consider it to be a useful book (not only for revising for exams and preparing for lectures as the authors suggest), but a practical guide which would be of more use on the wards than in the reference section of the library.

S H GREEN

Manual of Child Neurology. Owen B Evans. Pp 435: £32.50 paperback. Churchill Livingstone, 1987.

The author states that this book is a manual and not a text book and that it is written for 'paediatricians and other physicians involved in the primary care of children.' The book is divided into eight sections with the first two being on neurological examination and neurodiagnostic procedures. The following sections cover relevant groups of neurological disorders in childhood. Each chapter within a section has a short list of 'selected readings.' The illustrations are a combination of line drawings by the author and photographs that seem mainly to be of muscle biopsy specimens or computed tomograms. There are a large number of tables most of which are designed to give the reader a very wide range of differential diagnoses in any one clinical situation.

With at least a handful of good books on paediatric neurology now available it is difficult to see where this book will fit in and make a contribution. In many of the sections the author starts with very basic statements about the structure and function of the nervous system, but then goes on to give the reader extensive lists of differential diagnoses (some of which are a little questionable) but no guidance as to which disorders are common or which are rare. The balance of space given to different disorders is very variable and many of the opinions expressed are hardly contemporary. Indeed, in the 'selected read-