
In this monograph a clinician, a geneticist and a morbid anatomist join forces to describe and analyse a series of 116 cases of fibrocytic disease of the pancreas seen at The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. They conclude that, far from being simply a pancreatic lesion, this is a pluriglandular disease genetically determined and characterized by the secretion of abnormal mucus. On this conception it is unlikely to be curable, but general supportive and anti-infective treatment has led to a much better survival rate than was seen a decade ago.

The biggest section of the book is devoted to a study of the morbid histology of the disease, and a wealth of tables and photomicrographs of an outstanding order illustrate and clarify the points made by the authors in a fashion that even the rustiest histologist cannot fail to appreciate. There are tables of biochemical findings and short summaries of all the cases, and the book ends with a short chapter on other pancreatic dysplasias.

It is desirable that from time to time apparently new or at least unrecognized conditions should be the subject of an authoritative description and discussion, and a warm welcome will be assured in paediatric circles for the present volume.


This is not—nor is it meant to be—a comprehensive and authoritative treatise on the subject of vomiting in babies. The author sets out to question certain generally accepted and often empirical views on the subject and to advocate more detailed clinical analysis and more frequent use of radiological investigation. Largely as a result of adopting such principles it has become possible of recent years to separate from the heterogeneous group of babies with vomiting of uncertain origin—often classified as habitual vomiting—certain clearly defined syndromes. Many of these are the result of specific anatomical defects. Commensurate with a better understanding of the underlying pathology a more rational and effective treatment has become possible. One such example is afforded by the partial thoracic stomach. This condition is well reviewed, although the method illustrated for propping up an infant seems, at first sight, to carry a possible risk of strangulation! By contrast, however, other affections, notably diaphragmatic herniae and intestinal obstructions, are discussed extremely sketchily and there would appear to be little merit for their inclusion in this book. Other subjects considered include pylorospasm, certain aspects relating to the aetiology and treatment of pyloric stenosis, duodenal obstruction and vomiting occasioned by the compression and displacement of the stomach secondary to a distended, gas-filled transverse colon. Many views expressed on treatment and aetiology are controversial but serve possibly to stimulate discussion. Radiographic illustrations are of variable quality.

Although there is an extensive bibliography its value is considerably reduced by the failure to include many references made in the text. These too are often inaccurate and the spelling of authors’ names frequently variable and incorrect.