BOOK REVIEWS


The earlier work of the research unit set up at Wuppertal to investigate the effects and treatment of undernutrition will be familiar to paediatricians in this country, and the publication of the present report is most welcome. The reader’s first reaction will perhaps be the realization that children, compared to rats, are very poor experimental animals. The slowness of human growth and the impossibility of maintaining experimental conditions, even in an orphanage, when conditions are changing in the outside world are only two of the problems facing the investigator. The authors are the first to urge caution in drawing conclusions from their results. Nevertheless, they have accumulated a mass of interesting data, often conflicting with the findings of other observers, and their critical discussions of methods, planning of experiments, and possible causes of discrepancies provide invaluable and much-needed guidance in the scientific assessment of such work. While the various aspects of the problem studied are too numerous to be summarized briefly, it may be said that this monograph will amply repay careful study by anyone planning human nutritional or growth studies in the future, or wishing to evaluate similar studies undertaken in the past.


The authoritative monographs in this latest volume of Advances in Pediatrics are as welcome as their forerunners. Caffey writes on fibrous defects in the cortical walls of growing tubular bones; Meredith Campbell on the urinary tract; Gómez, Galván, Cravioto and Frenk on malnutrition with special reference to kwashiorkor; Edgar Mannheimer on phonocardiography; Perlstein on infantile cerebral palsy; Schwachman, Leubner and Catzel on fibrocystic disease of the pancreas, under the name of mucoviscidosis, and Swenson on congenital megacolon. If the titles of the monographs do not indicate their authors, at least the authors’ names leave the reader in little doubt as to what their subject matter will be. The eminence of the people writing on their chosen subjects is a guarantee that what they have to say will be well worth attention and it would be invidious to single out any of these seven articles for particular comment.

It is perhaps a pity that five of the articles are from the United States, but in view of the subjects chosen this is scarcely surprising. The editors are to be congratulated on their choice of subjects of such topical interest.


Few clinicians will see many cases of glycogen disease and certainly they will not see the various forms of it which have been described from time to time. The literature on the subject is very scattered and textbooks give only a very general picture of the condition. This monograph has been compiled from all the papers published since van Creveld’s paper in 1929. There are in fact 325 references. The author has been at great pains to see that each writer is given full credit for his work or opinions in the body of the text, hence the book cannot be read as a dissertation on the disease. It is, however, a valuable reference book particularly to the physician meeting the condition in one of its more unusual forms. There is a full description of the various types, the hepatic, hepatomegalic, cardiomyocardial, and nervous. There is a section on the biochemistry and histopathology and chapters on differential diagnosis and aetiology. The latter is perhaps rather academic and abstruse. The writer describes a case of his own in considerable detail, adding one more case to the literature. There are some rather speculative sections, such as the one dealing with glycogen disease and the syndrome described by Mauriac of hepatomegaly in diabetic children associated with stunted growth. These, however, will provide a certain stimulus to anyone making a deep enquiry into aetiology.

The book can certainly be recommended to anyone dealing with a case presenting unusual manifestations. There will certainly be some part of the book which will throw light on the problem.