precise and detailed instructions on how to achieve them. The methods advocated are those developed at the Meeting Street School in Providence, Rhode Island, and the authors have managed to capture something of the atmosphere of restrained optimism which is so evident to the visitor to the School. There is frequent reference to the practice and opinions of other authorities, however, and in general the therapeutic approach is applicable to British conditions, though the statement that ‘The pioneer days of treating cerebral palsy are over. Facilities abound …’ will raise wistful eyebrows in this country.

In some chapters there is perhaps too much discussion of general paediatric problems, which is too brief to help paediatricians and unnecessarily detailed for therapists. There are few difficulties for British readers, although the definition of the perinatal period as extending from conception through the first month after birth will not be generally acceptable and may be misleading. There is a useful appraisal of the value of pneumencephalography in cerebral palsy, and an illuminating chapter on the problems and social needs of young adults.

This book is likely to be of most value to those actively engaged in the care of children with cerebral palsy, both physicians and therapists, who could profitably consult it many times daily, for it contains a wealth of practical advice.

However, this is not a treatise on drugs. It sets out to consider the problems posed by biological research in this field as applied to children, with the developmental tide running fast. If behaviour patterns are compared, then what constitutes ‘improvement’?

May not odd behaviour serve a valuable functional purpose in calling attention to stress? Is it advisable to obliterate signs of tension without fuller investigation? And above all, what constitutes ‘normal controls’?

There is a plea for better planning in researches aimed at evaluating the advantages of one drug over another, and because the conference is reported verbatim there is a good deal of repetition. In this country we tend perhaps to skim the contents and read only the summaries. This one cannot be read in that way for it describes a group of experts from various disciplines, psychiatry, paediatrics, psychology, biochemistry, social medicine, and others, comparing essentially their common areas of interest, doubt and uncertainty, in a field made more difficult by reason of commercial initiative and rapid advances. In reading it, one is allowed to share their difficulties.

Child Research in Psychopharmacology, Edited by

It is important to recognize that this account of a conference held at Washington, D.C., and sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health is written in America.

One appreciates the wealth and generosity of a country prepared to publish in full, not written papers, much less carefully drawn conclusions, but the thinking aloud which a gathering of this kind fosters, indeed, invites. One may regret that the drugs about which it is written, are, of course, given their American trade names; some of them sound unfamiliar to readers in this country. This latter is no serious drawback since a comprehensive glossary of drugs currently used in psychiatry is given at the beginning of the book. At the end is a reference list containing 159 items, reviewing current usage of psycho-pharmacological agents with children.

One gathers that the conference was called because of the flood of new tranquillizers, thus encouraging their misuse. The chairman, Dr. Milton Senn, deplores this in a succinct contribution which ends the conference. Pointing out that paediatricians and family doctors are called on increasingly nowadays to treat behaviour disorders and symptoms arising from psychological difficulties, he pleads that the drug companies should not encourage ‘the nonpsychiatric physician to use drugs when other areas of psychotherapy are needed, useful and indicated’. Indeed, there is more wisdom packed into the two pages of closing remarks than in other contributions that are more diffuse in texture, and cover more ground.


This book, written by the Professor of Paediatrics at the Budapest University Hospital, and his cardiological colleague is indeed a welcome addition to the literature on paediatric cardiology. It has been translated from the Hungarian into very readable German, and on reading through the various chapters it becomes increasingly obvious that the authors have had very wide experience in their field.

It has been compiled along more or less conventional lines in that a section on cardiac embryology, anatomy and physiology is followed by a chapter on the examination and investigation of the child with heart disease. This latter in particular is well thought out and contains helpful hints.

In contrast to recent publications in the English language, more space has been given to the sections dealing with acquired forms of heart disease, and such conditions as rheumatic fever, diphtheritic myocarditis and the virus cardiitides are excellently dealt with, though one can possibly argue with the authors on some points where the cause of rheumatic fever and its prevention with prophylactic antibiotics is concerned. Heart involvement in acute bacterial and viral diseases and its management is fully discussed.

In a book of this kind, however, it is a little surprising that the authors have not dealt with congenital heart disease in greater detail, particularly as their patient material extends to 16,000. It has been estimated that approximately six per 1,000 live births suffer from congenital heart disease in some form or another and paediatricians are becoming increasingly interested in the early diagnosis of these abnormalities. Endocardial fibro-elastosis, is not mentioned at all. Admittedly the incidence of various diseases varies from country to country.