
This volume contains a symposium on Back Disorders in Children. A Symposium, by definition, is a set of contributions on one subject from various authors and points of view. It does not necessarily therefore cover the whole subject and undue emphasis may be placed on some aspects. Here, there are two excellent chapters on vertebral development, normal and abnormal, a list of all possible causes of backache in children, and again another list of pathological lesions. The treatment of these lesions is scantily recorded. A chapter on non-specific arthritis of the spine gives an excellent account of the medicinal treatment, whereas orthopaedic treatment is dismissed in a few lines. There are two first-class articles, clear, complete yet compressed, on infantile idiopathic scoliosis and on diastematomyelia. They can be read with delight and understanding by physician and surgeon alike. Three chapters on lumbar root irritation, sciatic scoliosis, and spondylolisthesis in children, overlap considerably. I could find nothing on the common postural problems, the flat spine, and the sway back. Juvenile kyphosis (Scheuermann’s disease) is considered on a pathological basis, but specific treatment and prognosis are absent.

The production, x-ray pictures and illustrations are excellent. The volume also contains articles on vertical talus and congenital genu recurvatum, of interest to paediatricians, as well as sections on more general orthopaedic subjects.


This Atlas is the third of a series of standard studies of human growth and development, the previous publications relating to the hand and knee. This work is the result of 30 years of study at the Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. There are 31 standard x-ray plates of the foot and ankle at varying intervals from birth to early adult life and standards of reference are given with each plate to enable maturity and skeletal age to be readily assessed. Maturity indicators are given for each individual bone and joint in the ankle and foot, and the discussion of changes in the shape and development of each bone and joint during growth is of especial interest. This book, with its two predecessors in this series, must be regarded as a standard reference work for paediatricians, radiologists, orthopaedic surgeons and all those who are concerned in any way in the growth and development of children.


This is an important book for anyone working in the field of respiratory or cardiovascular management in young children and young adults. This age-group is quite fairly stated in the title, and one can only hope that similar data will be forthcoming for younger children and infants down to the neonatal age-group. I think the excellence of the book lies in the fact that all the work has been done in one laboratory.


While deaths in childhood have been steadily decreasing since the beginning of the century, deaths in childhood due to accidents have become increasingly common, and today accidents are by far the most frequent cause of death of children under 15 years of age. In this timely little book Dr. Gädeke examines the circumstances causing accidental deaths in childhood in the town of Freiburg and the surrounding country districts and compares them with corresponding figures for the City of Hamburg.

His painstaking investigations show that while death due to infection is relatively more common among the children of the country population, death due to accidents is considerably more common in the town and even more common in the big city. The various causes for accidental deaths are analysed, and it is not surprising that traffic accidents, the most common cause of accidental deaths in childhood, are much more frequently observed in urban communities.

Every year 0-46% of the children living in the town as compared with only 0-2% of the children living in the country are injured in traffic accidents, but the percentage of severe or fatal accidents is much higher in the countryside. A detailed analysis of the time, place and type of accident, the age, the family circumstances of the children and the type of vehicles involved yields a wealth of interesting information. A similar survey of all injuries due to poisons and burns shows how easily most of these accidents could have been prevented and incidentally reveals that a disturbingly high percentage of children of mothers going out to work are liable to this type of injury.

In his conclusions, Dr. Gädeke points out that most accidental injuries in childhood are easily avoidable and could be avoided if the commonly prevailing view that these injuries are due to accidents of fate would radically alter. Once we realize that the causes of accidental injuries in childhood are as predictable and preventable as those of infectious diseases in the same age-group, the first step in reducing the main cause of morbidity and mortality in childhood will be taken. Dr. Gädeke deserves thanks for increasing our understanding of the causation of childhood injuries and for pointing a moral.