mortality and morbidity will find something of interest here and will be infected by the spirit of inquiry which is best caught in the introductory remarks to one of the papers on birth asphyxia: 'It is interesting that we as paediatricians have interests which seem to be going farther and farther back in utero, while the obstetricians extend farther and farther, and rightly so, into the follow-up period after birth. Yet there is still perhaps not enough blending of the specialties.'

Librarians and secretaries of medical societies should make a particular note of this book and of the fact that copies of the original tapes may be had on loan from Smith, Klein and French who sponsored the recording of the conference.

Morbus Haemolyticus Neonatorum im ABO-System.


The frequency of ABO incompatibility between mother and baby resulting in haemolytic disease of the baby is estimated at about 0.5% of all deliveries. This of itself is probably sufficient justification for yet another addition to the growing number of publications on the subject; although fortunately very few cases are of such severity as to require active treatment.

Dr. Fischer has summarized most of the known facts of haemolytic disease in ABO incompatibilities and compiled a comprehensive bibliography in an attractive and commendably short book of fewer than 100 pages.

Many of the diagrams used are of a rather rudimentary character, e.g. that of page 28. They add little to the script and one wonders if perhaps some at least could have been omitted.

A great deal of emphasis is laid on the demonstration of the Direct Coombs test in these cases and a new technique is described which, it is claimed, will disclose almost all cases of ABO affected infants.

While of academic interest, this is of very limited clinical significance, since the result of the test, positive or negative, is unlikely to influence treatment to any extent. The paediatrician will still be guided by the clinical condition of the baby and the degree of bilirubinaemia irrespective of the result of the Coombs test. Indeed, Dr. Fischer himself makes this point in his section on treatment.

The value of the test is further limited by the fact that since it is done on the baby's blood, it can give no prenatal information as to the probability of serious disease at birth.

Antenatal prediction is covered by the author's ingenious but somewhat laborious AB y globulin neutralization test, but it is feared that few laboratories in this country at any rate could devote the time required for the technique described. In any case this test has been largely superseded by the use of pig erythrocytes in a much simpler and more rapid test (Tovey et al. (1962). Brit. J. Haemat., 8, no. 3, July).

It is not to be expected that a book devoted entirely to such a highly specialized subject would enjoy a wide circulation; but it should find a place in the libraries of paediatric and obstetric units and in laboratories engaged in blood-group serology.


The opening sentence of this book runs 'In 1928 the senior authors have published a "Clinical Haematology of Childhood"'. What a flood of memories were loosed on the reviewer by this simple sentence: memories of battling with the German of the 1928 book, soon to be joined by those of battling with the English of the present one, memories of Henry Baar himself, and above all of his prodigious intellect and grasp of his favourite specialty, among many, of haematology.

Baar and Stransky have been joined by Stella Baar and, for the last few pages, by Keith Rogers, to produce a new, and more monumental than usual, account of the errors and pitfalls into which the haematological processes of children may stray. There have been several textbooks of paediatric haematology in recent years, each perhaps fulfilling a need for somebody and each having its own particular merits. The particular merit of the present book is its compendium-like completeness, the thoroughness with which every facet of the subject is covered, all in 902 pages, and the authoritative manner of presentation. Truly this is a textbook, not likely to be found on the laboratory bench but almost certain to find a place on every haematologist's bookshelves, to be frequently consulted in the elucidation of knotty problems and the preparation of advanced lectures. Baar, lately of Birmingham, now writes from the United States, Stella Baar and Rogers from Birmingham, England, and Stransky from the Philippines. Investigation of references in the text to St. Baar showed not that the senior author was being in any way anticipatory, but that Stella was being differentiated from him.

Any attempt to evaluate this book would be like trying to evaluate 100%—it is so complete. To read the shortest section leaves one with a feeling of mental breathlessness; and after considerable reading one is forced to the conclusion that the haematology of childhood can be made to appear a most formidable discipline.


This book immediately appeals for several reasons. In the first place it fills a rare gap in the overcrowded bookshelves of today's medical literature. This aspect of gynaecology heretofore has presumably been thought to be covered satisfactorily in brief chapters in medical and surgical paediatric textbooks, and perhaps a little more fully in those of ordinary gynaecology. The