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he finds 96% of all expectant mothers expressing a willingness to breast feed but, as in all other western countries, only 37% of them are actually doing so at the end of two months. Women of a higher social strata are more likely to breast feed than those in a lower strata. Von Harnach from the paediatric aspect finds a significantly lower incidence of respiratory infection amongst breast-fed infants. Weiner in a paper on plasma biochemical findings comparing breast-fed and bottle-fed infants finds no material difference between the two groups. Finally, Krieg and Cretius describe their experience with the rooming-in system, and come out in favour of a modified system where the infants can be moved to the nursery at night.

The papers are all comprehensive and enough information for a large textbook is packed into a few pages. This makes for heavy reading.


This symposium was held in Gröningen in May 1967, and organized on similar lines to the earlier symposium in Gröningen in 1964. Some 60 workers from Europe and America and one each from Beirut and Cairo took part. Sessions were devoted to: (1) role of the placenta; (2) assessment of fetal development; (3) experimental aspects of dysmaturity; (4) hereditary and environmental aspects of low birthweight; (5) adaptation of the low birthweight infant to extrauterine life; (6) obstetrical and preventive aspects of dysmaturity; (7) developmental aspects.

After years of neglect, the growth of the fetus has become a subject of intense interest, and it is encouraging to see in the papers here presented the ingenuity being displayed by many of those who are seeking means of overcoming the formidable obstacles intervening between the fetus and those who would study it. Any student of fetal growth will want to have a copy of this book, which contains much data from both clinical and experimental sources, not readily available elsewhere.

The discussions, though doubtless worth while to the participants at the time, seem of less value when in cold print. The current vogue for publishing verbatim the discussions that take place at meetings of this kind, laudatory remarks and all, should surely be questioned.

Handbuch der Kinderheilkunde. Band VI. Edited by H. Opitz and F. Schmid and written by 58 contributors from Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, Holland, and Austria. The first part (613 pages) deals with diseases of muscles, bones, joints, and connective tissue: the second (578 pages) with abnormalities of blood cells, haemoglobin, clotting factors, and the reticuloses.

Each part opens with excellent reviews of the embryology, physiology, molecular biology, anatomy, microscopy (light and electron), and genetic aspects of the subject. The areas covered are vast, the treatment in depth is staggering, and no serious criticism is called for. To the all-rounder, many of the more esoteric enzyme systems, the molecular structure and the phylo- and ontogenetic aspects of, for instance, the red cells, are bewildering. The editors themselves admit that the clinician is threatened with incomprehension when faced with some of the research haematologist’s speculations. A striking example—by no less an authority than Professor Jonxis—appears on pages 654 and 656, both of which are covered with hieroglyphics representing the 141 amino acids making up the a chain, and the 146 acids making up the β-polypeptide change of the haem molecule. Most impressive.

Obviously anyone can pick a few holes here and there: why no mention of the hypolastic type of achondroplasia? why no account of the Ellis-van Creveld syndrome? It is, in fact, mentioned in the differential diagnosis of six congenital bone abnormalities. Perhaps a full description can be found in another volume but, if so, which? Why no account of dermatomyositis? The condition is referred to eight times in the index. Two of these references are misprints—dermatomyositis does not appear on page 997 or 1004. The others refer to differential diagnostic points, not to the disease itself. A further odd illogicality: though there are 19 references to erythroblastosis and kernicterus in the index (one on page 999, is another misprint—no mention of the disease on that page), a full description of this disease is not to be found in this volume at all; it will appear in volume 1, which deals with growth and development!

This type of book is tremendous fun to dip into or ‘read up’ in, but to review it is a daunting task. In addition there is always the nagging doubt about the cost-benefit of such a monster compilation. Particularly when one remembers the vast advances in paediatric knowledge during the past decade; how out of date will these nine volumes be in 1978? Still, one is impressed. Impressed by the width and depth of learning, by the beautiful print, lay-out, illustrations, and binding, and last, but not least, by the staggering price.


Dr. Paul Sandifer’s premature death deprived his colleagues of a highly respected and well-loved neurologist. His loss was probably felt most keenly by orthopaedic surgeons and paediatricians with whom he had worked so closely.

This small volume contains brief descriptions of a
very large number of neurological disorders which are likely to bring patients to orthopaedic surgeons on account of deformity, pain, or loss of function.

Inevitably many of the descriptions are brief; infantile progressive spinal muscular atrophy, for example, is dealt with in less than a page, and 'lead palsy' is discussed in 12 lines. On the other hand, 'spinal dysraphism' and 'pes cavus', both subjects of much more importance to the orthopaedic surgeon, receive relatively extensive treatment.

In almost every line there is evidence of Paul Sandifer's immense experience. This is well illustrated in the first sentence of the book in which the floppy baby is described as follows: 'Babies are sometimes born so limp, floppy and weak that, when handled, they dangle like a rag doll'; or in his description of the changing appearance of children suffering from progressive spina muscular atrophy as their disease progresses. It is typical of the author that the major criticism of his book should be that it is too modest. It fulfills a need but would probably have been still more useful had it been three or four times as long and accompanied by illustrations. The volume is well printed and there is a small but well-chosen bibliography, but no index.


This volume resembles a lengthy Ph.D. thesis. It comprises a text of some 80,000 words, supported by a full bibliography of more than 800 references. The essential content of the text concerns the application of esterase cytochemistry as a marker for monocytes and their precursors in normal subjects and in disease states, including monocytic leukaemias. By the use of α-naphthyl acetate as a substrate for a non-specific esterase largely confined to monocytes, the author has determined that normal bone-marrow contains about 5% of monocytes and about 1% of promonocytes. When naphthol-ASD-chloroacetate is used as substrate, granulocytes react most strongly, but cells believed to be immature monocytes also show positivity. From a rather elaborate analysis of esterase cytochemistry with these substrates and also with naphthol-AS acetate, the conclusion is drawn that monocytes are of myeloid origin, probably deriving from promonocytes. The Rebuck skin-window technique has been used to study macrophages in inflammation and a combination of cytological and esterase-cytochemical methods lead the author to conclude that the macrophages here and in many other sites may be derived from monocytes by transformation.

With regard to the participation of monocytes in leukaemia, the cytochemical evidence adduced from esterase studies suggests that mixed myelomonocytic forms make up about a third of all acute myeloid cases, but that purely monocytic forms of the so-called Schilling variety are of doubtful existence.

Much of this research appears in line with other cytochemical studies of recent years, and the general conclusions are in conformity with the views of most haematologists who now accept the monocyte as a myeloid cell; but the author is perhaps too ready to allow his particular cytochemical methods a degree of specificity they may not deserve. His derivation of the monocyte line from promyelocytes is a case in point; use of the Sudan Black reaction rather than peroxidase in parallel with esterase reactions might have led to a different interpretation. But the experimental work as a whole makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the genesis and functions of the monocyte.

Surrounding and amplifying the original content of the book is an exhaustive review of the literature on all aspects of the monocyte. There can be few papers referring to this cell not mentioned in the text and listed in the bibliography. The book is well produced and adequately illustrated.


This is a comprehensive account of paediatric 'special pathology', arranged in organ systems with the exception of sections on growth and metabolism, and infections. Each system is introduced by a short account of its embryology; each chapter is followed by a large classified bibliography. The index is, on the whole, good. The book is beautifully presented, with many good photographs and a few excellent line drawings which could have been used much more where suitable photographs were not available.

The main reason it will not be widely read is that it is much too expensive; and it is too expensive because it is very ambitious. The preface offers 'a reference work for medical students and postgraduate trainees . . . general pathologists, paediatricians, family physicians etc.' An attempt has truly been made to provide such a work, with the inevitable result that for each of these groups, the book is less than ideal. Only professional pathologists and paediatricians will consider buying it for their personal use; both will find it, on the whole, too superficial in its consideration of the major problems of the subject.

The pathologist will contend that this failure of emphasis results from the inclusion of some 'adult' pathology, and of titbits of specialized (e.g. dermatological) pathology, both of which are fully treated in other works in his possession. The paediatrician will blame it partly on the space occupied by the multiplicity of descriptions, and more especially photographs, of 'collector's items'. Both of these views are valid, and point to a major part of the cost of the book; this will not, however, deter the compilers of libraries for paediatrics and pathologists in training, who will rightly conclude that such a major work should not be missing from their shelves.