
This book reports the proceedings of a symposium on medium chain triglycerides (MCT) held in 1967. Physiological, experimental, and clinical aspects of the subject are presented by experts; and the discussions, which also contain much useful information, are reported in full and have been grouped in separate chapters adjacent to the papers on related topics. The contributions on absorption and hepatic metabolism provide an excellent and essential introduction to the descriptions of the use of MCT in a wide variety of clinical conditions, in most of which malabsorption is a prominent feature. A section devoted to paediatric disorders contains a detailed study of the effects of MCT in children with cystic fibrosis by Nancy Huang from Philadelphia, and a review of the value of MCT in childhood malabsorption by Charlotte Anderson from Melbourne. Three appendices provide useful information regarding the physical, chemical, and nutritional characteristics of MCT as well as giving a number of recipes; the latter, though primarily designed for the American way of life, can easily be adapted to suit British palates.

The editor, John Senior, has made valuable personal contributions in both the opening and closing chapters by emphasizing the importance of proper methodology, and of critically reviewing the indications for, and consequences of, the use of MCT. As a result of his efforts the book is well balanced, easy to read, and has amply fulfilled his intention to provide ‘a preliminary bibliography for reference by workers entering the field’. It can be recommended to all those who wish to use MCT diets for their patients, and should be available to any dietetic department asked to provide such a diet.


It is a pleasure to welcome the second edition of a book which was rightly acclaimed as a classic when it first appeared nearly 10 years ago. At that time many people thought it was the best work of its kind. The concept of the book was brilliant. It represented the cumulative experience gained from several thousand patients analysed by a team of experts. By marrying their own experience to those of other workers through a searching appraisal of the literature, the authors produced full accounts of the diagnosis and treatment of all the known heart disorders in infancy and childhood. Their material was so vast that their statistics were significant, and their knowledge was obviously based upon a sure foundation.

To keep the student and doctor up to date a periodic revision of the text is essential. In a large textbook such as this, the task of revision is formidable, and by the time the new edition is published it may be found that parts of it are already out of date. For example, when the present edition appeared Dr. Rashkind had just introduced his catheter technique for producing an artificial atrial septal defect in transposition of the great arteries, thus outdated the Blalock-Hanlon procedure. In addition, the experience of the Mustard operation for this anomaly had been more than doubled by now and its startling success confirmed. Writers of textbooks accept this as an inevitable risk, and hope that the discerning reader will have the good sense to supplement his reading with a perusal of recent journals.

However, the basic anatomical and physiological knowledge and clinical data have now been thoroughly worked out for most of the important disorders, and the reader of this book will find it all placed before him as clearly as he could wish.

Inevitably there must be some criticisms. Paediatric cardiology is at a stage where knowledge is increasing rapidly, but much of it is still incomplete. This leads to interesting speculative discussion, the inclusion of all of which makes the book inevitably and unnecessarily large and diffuse. The authors must accept blame for erring somewhat in this respect, and they could have further reduced the size of the book in other ways. For example, when two or more anomalies are associated it is necessary to provide a detailed description in one section only: or again there is no need to repeat quotations from the literature in full, in different sections of the book. The practice of giving named references in parentheses throughout the text is popular, but it interrupts the smooth reading of the text and also uses valuable space.

In allowing their book to grow so big the authors have also magnified the task of accurate proof reading so that there are many typographical errors. Most of these are of no importance, but some are as testing as any elaborate ‘brain teaser’, and in one case the figures in the text are at variance with those in the table.

The material of this book has been presented in a logical and orderly manner. All the sections are so good that it would be invidious to try to pick out any for special mention. Many of them have been rewritten and there are a few newcomers, but it is good to see some of the original material preserved, such as the excellent little chapter on embryology. The illustrations are well chosen and the quality of reproduction is excellent. The importance of the newborn period and early infancy has been emphasized by devoting a chapter to the special problems of this age-group, particularly those which concern the differential diagnosis of congenital heart disease and ‘pulmonary syndromes’.

The quality of this second edition has ensured that the book remains the classic textbook of paediatric cardiology.


This quickly read booklet of 72 pages reviews the health and habits of 520 children drawn from a ‘high and
middle socio-economic population. In stressing the traditional prejudices against modern medical methods found in so many cultures of developing communities, the authors have outlined some problems and advise how they may be tackled. Traditionally the newborn baby has his breast feeds supplemented from the third day of life with 1 oz. ghee or butter and honey three times a day. As the result of commercial advertising, evaporated milk has replaced breast feeding while the dubious complements continue. The consequent increase of gastro-intestinal disorders is, as the authors say, only to be expected. A table of weight and height increments reveals the surprising fact that females outstrip males at all ages from 1 to 5 years in both these parameters. There is too some surprising advice on 'how to get rid of the mucus'; mild saline expectorants, steam inhalation, and the forcing of fluids are all advocated. Only 8% of the group were immunized because of local prejudices; aspirin given at the time of the procedure is said to allay parents' fears of the consequences.

A chapter on clothes rightly deplors the use of 'non absorbable, gaudy synthetic materials' for infants. Though skin disorders are consequently commoner, nappy rash is never seen because the babies are nude until the age of 2—what a contrast to the plastic covered bottoms of British babies.

This book may remind a few doctors of their own problems in places like India, but it is not a book for more sophisticated paediatric bookshelves.

Sir Denis Browne Memorial Fund

The Sir Denis Browne Memorial Fund, set up to commemorate his 45 years of devoted and brilliantly original work in paediatric surgery, has announced the inauguration of an annual Memorial Medal. Sir Denis was often referred to as the father of paediatric surgery, and the gold Medal, awarded by the Trustees on the recommendation of the British Association of Paediatric Surgeons, is to mark an outstanding contribution in this field. The Medal is inscribed with Sir Denis' words, 'The aim of Paediatric Surgery is to set a standard, not to seek a monopoly.'

The award of the first medal was made to Dr. Robert Edward Gross, Surgeon-in-Chief, Cardiovascular Surgery, Children's Hospital Medical Center, Boston, Mass., U.S.A., at the International Meeting of Paediatric Surgeons held in Liverpool on July 19, 1968. Dr. Gross is also Ladd Professor of Children's Surgery at the Harvard University Medical School, Boston.

The Trustees are also setting up a permanent display of the instruments and writings of Sir Denis Browne in the Museum of the Institute of Child Health, The Hospital For Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London.

The Trustees of the Memorial Fund are Sir Ivison Macadam, Chairman, C.V.O., C.B.E., Lady Moyra Browne, O.B.E., Mr. James Crooks, C.V.O., F.R.C.S., Mr. H. H. Nixon, F.R.C.S., Mr. G. J. Piller, Mr. P. P. Rickham, M.S., F.R.C.S., Mr. D. J. Waterston, M.B.E., F.R.C.S.