The production of the book is, in general, pleasing—a good paper, not over-glossy, excellent setting out, plentiful illustration. Indeed, in places it is really an annotated atlas rather than a textbook. It could be argued that it is too lavish, too 'permanent' for ready revision of a growing subject, but this might be to underestimate American thoroughness. Unfortunately, the references are not fully representative of the world literature and contain a number of misprints, as do the figure legends, some of which seem to have been completely transposed.

As an introduction to biopsy microscopy, including its comparative biology, and as a reflection of the present revisionary storm in renal disease this book is strongly recommended to the critical reader. It has less to offer in terms of a complete or argued case on renal disease, but that might be impossible of achievement in the present state of knowledge. It does not pretend to offer a structure-function related presentation.


There are those who have the opportunity to give their time to studying development. Those who have, over the years, discovered how necessary for clinical use with normal and handicapped children in some smattering of knowledge in this field can only be impressed by this book of 26 authors and 777 pages. One author each comes from U.S.S.R., U.K., and Canada; 23 from the United States, today the leading patron of scientific research.

I can certainly recommend paediatricians to browse through the book to get ideas of the areas and topics on which research is in progress.

Denenberg refers to the concept of the critical period. Scott hypothesized one for basic social relationships, certain optimal periods of learning, and a critical period involving the life-long general effects of stimulation in early life. Denenberg's review deals with the last, and notes for example that in animals handling shortly after birth reduces later 'emotionality' as judged by the reaction in adult life to an electric shock, but that the exact age and type of 'handling' affect the results.

Levine and Mullins' review of hormones in infancy makes it clear that the development of CNS mechanisms is lastingly affected by the animal's hormonal state in the early days of life. One wonders about those short gestation infants who 20 years ago were given testosterone or thyroid hormone. Is someone following them up?

Lawrence Casler puts forward the thesis that the human infant and child does not need maternal love to function normally and that the ill effects of institutionalization are due to perceptual deprivation rather than to maternal deprivation. Social stimulation is indeed necessary. Harlow is quoted 'it seems possible—even likely—that the infant—mother affectional system is dispensable, whereas the infant—infant system is the sine qua non for later adjustment in all spheres of monkey life'. (What about the only child?) 'There is no evidence that social stimulation is best administered by a loving mother or mother figure'; several mother figures may have advantage over a single one. He concludes with, 'Fortunately, all the issues are amenable to experimental study.'

There is much to make one wonder whether what our culture does is wise. Such uncertainty is most exciting, even if decisions on how we are to bring up children must be taken now. It will be good to have more certain answers on even a few of the points of controversy, and one can only be grateful that a great deal of work is in progress. Paediatricians should not be waiting for the answers; they should be helping to guide the research workers now, partly so they can learn the ideas that are current at the moment in research laboratories, and partly because their knowledge of children could sometimes save research workers a good deal of time and trouble.

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The Congress of French-speaking Paediatricians will be held at Strasbourg (France) 1-3 September, 1969.

The themes proposed are as follows: Feeding of premature infant; Reanimation of the newborn baby; Mucopolysaccharidosis and sphingolipidosis.

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