logical studies. The practising paediatrician will find the papers on clinical and genetic aspects of most interest. Walton and Gardner-Medwin, describing their 'second thoughts on classification of the muscular dystrophies', give what must be the clearest short account available of the inheritance, clinical features, diagnosis, and pathology of this confusing group of disorders. Walton's studies on classification have been one of the major advances in understanding muscular dystrophy; as Nattrass remarks 'classification is not an academic exercise, but is no more and no less than accurate diagnosis'. Other papers are of more specialized interest, but they contain some useful tips for the clinician. For example, it is now clear that there is a benign form of X-linked muscular dystrophy with a very different prognosis from the commoner Duchenne variety. A simple clinical distinction can be made on the basis of age of onset: the benign form never begins earlier, and the Duchenne form never later, than the age of 7. The studies on more fundamental aspects of muscle disease do not at present seem to give a clear message either on the cause or on possible future lines of treatment of the muscular dystrophies. Nevertheless, one cannot but be impressed by the breadth of research in this field, and by the generosity of the Muscular Dystrophy Research group, who have supported every investigation reported at this symposium.


This is the report of a Study Group on Control Mechanisms in Cystic Fibrosis held in London on November 29 and 30, 1967.

Twenty-two members took part, including leading workers in a wide variety of fields, and clinicians with a wide experience of CF, drawn from the U.K., U.S.A., Sweden, Israel, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

There are 8 sections, each of which opens with an account of the present state of physiological knowledge, and the present situation so far as explaining the findings in CF is concerned: and is followed by an edited discussion in which all members took part.

These sections, after a general introductory section on the pathogenesis of CF, cover the nervous, pharmacological, and humoral control of secretion by the salivary glands, sweat glands, bronchial mucus glands, and pancreas; water and electrolyte transport across cell membranes; the role of kinins in exocrine glands; and normal and abnormal patterns of secretion in bronchial glands.

This short report gives, mainly in discussion form, a remarkably complete and wide-ranging account of the present state of the search for explanations of how a single recessive gene affects in widely differing ways the secretory function of most exocrine glands; and how, while its most serious and common clinical effects are almost limited to lung and pancreas, the kidney escapes entirely, and the liver is only irregularly affected, usually late in the natural history of the disease.

Some of the more striking recent lines of thought which find expression and discussion here are: (1) The presence in CF serum of a protein-related substance, perhaps a polypeptide, which may mediate some of the effects on endocrine gland function, and which has a demonstrable effect on ciliary motility in experimental animals. (2) The presence in CF sweat of a substance which affects sodium transport other than through effects on the sodium pump. (3) The role of surface-associated mucopolysaccharides in cellular ion regulation and transport phenomena. (4) Secretin-resistance of the CF pancreas, with possible evidence of a generalized defect in water transport of a kind which has serious effects only in certain areas. (5) The possible use of the pentachlorophenol-damaged monkey as an experimental model of the disease.

This nicely edited and well-produced account of a stimulating and well-organized discussion has perhaps a transitory value. It gives, however, a very precise delineation of the 'fields of ignorance' at the present time.


The first edition of this book was published 84 years ago for the purpose of improving standards of hygiene and control of communicable diseases in schools. This year sees the publication of the 14th edition, and the major part of the book is still devoted to communicable diseases, despite the fact that these are much less of a problem now than 84 years ago. It is difficult to understand the inclusion of such rarely seen disorders as diphtheria and Weil's disease, to mention but two examples.

Recognition has been given to present-day problems by the introduction of short sections on the difficulties of adolescence and the problems associated with menstruation. Nevertheless there are some glaring omissions. Nothing is said, for example, about the medical aspects of learning disorders, the problems of epilepsy and asthma in schoolchildren, and the new pattern of medical examination being tried in many schools. The examination of vision and hearing is not mentioned.

A book which is as unbalanced as this cannot really fulfill the hopes expressed in the preface to the 14th edition, that it will be a useful handbook for workers in all schools and will be of interest to all school medical officers, and in addition to teachers, nurses, and other personnel in the schools. It still retains a strong flavour of its origin, with its emphasis on hygiene and infectious diseases, and seems to be slanted particularly towards medical officers employed by independent school authorities.