Book Reviews


This is the third edition of the standard textbook by Professor Swenson and 24 colleagues at the Children's Memorial Hospital and Northwestern University, Chicago. The opening chapters deal very fully with general considerations such as neonatal physiology, genetics, anaesthetics, intensive care, and psychological effects of hospitalization—a topic which it is good to see discussed so thoughtfully in a surgical textbook. The remaining sections cover surgical problems comprehensively under the usual anatomical headings. Neurosurgery, orthopaedics, and other surgical specialties are included.

The text is, of course, intended primarily for the surgeon, and surgical techniques are described in detail with numerous illustrations. However, this book will also be of great value to the paediatrician, providing clear and authoritative guidance on the surgical problems which he frequently encounters. The style is readable; the photographs, x-rays, drawings, and diagrams are of exceptional quality, and the two volumes are particularly handsomely produced.


This is a big book, two-thirds as big as Nelson's Textbook of Pediatrics, and 18 of its 1000 odd pages are required to list the 334 contributors (is this a record?).

This question has to be asked—is the idea of divorcing therapy from the rest of medicine a good or even a possible one? This book has failed to convince one reader that it is. Many contributors have clearly given up the attempt to restrict themselves solely to treatment, so that some articles differ little from those to be found in a full textbook. Others seem to have felt that the amount of space devoted to a subject ought to bear some relation to its importance, whereby an article on obesity is given 3 pages, though the message from its author could virtually have been given in the same number of words—"Treatment is hopeless". Similarly, the section on intussusception (2 pages) boils down to little more than a statement that there exists a choice of two methods of treatment, surgical or enema reduction, though the author might surely have discussed indications for the employment of each.

Here and there one encounters pearls, as, for instance, J. D. Crawford's excellent account of the management of the too-tall girl. But even here the disadvantages of restricting discussion solely to therapy are evident, as the crucial question of diagnosis, i.e. prediction of height in these individuals, is not covered.

It is only fair to add that there are clearly many paediatricians who by no means share this reviewer's lukewarm appreciation of the book, to judge from the wide circulation enjoyed by the three previous volumes.


This book gives an account of the proceedings of the First European Congress of Perinatal Medicine held in Berlin in March 1968. Over 80 articles are included in its 300 pages and they can be classified under three main headings. The first is concerned with antenatal diagnosis and treatment, the emphasis being heavily on the problem of severe rhesus iso-immunization. One must hopefully look to the reports of future congresses for consideration of disturbances in placental function or indeed any of the obstetric aspects of prematurity, which assume increasing importance in view of the great demands on medical and nursing skills created by neonatal special care units. The second section deals with the monitoring of the fetus in the intrapartum period, and to judge from the places of origin of the articles presented here it would seem that Saling's influence remains stronger on the continent of Europe than in Britain. It is pertinent to mention here the excellence throughout of the English translations, which have been undertaken by Dr. W. B. Schulze. The later sections are concerned with the newborn infant, and cover resuscitation, energy requirements, and the management of respiratory difficulty; and here many notable British contributions are well represented.

It has apparently been the editor's intention that the individual chapters should be largely self-contained. To some extent this aim has been achieved, but liberal quantities of space given to diagrams and tables of results have left little room for the development of the authors' arguments, and in the end the over-all impression is of a book which contains a series of brief and somewhat dogmatic accounts of personal practice. Most of the discussions have been omitted and only occasionally does the flavour of genuine debate and discussion break through, most clearly, needless to say, in the section on resuscitation.
The main value of this book therefore is that it provides a summary of international current practice in a variety of perinatal subjects. In addition British investigators will find the extensive references to much of the European work in these fields particularly useful.


Paediatric and allergy books usually devote one chapter to allergic problems in childhood. The foreword states that the world swarms with allergic children, so it is not surprising that a book was required to review and summarize the present knowledge of the diagnosis, investigation, and treatment of allergy in children. In 26 chapters and over 550 pages, it can be said that the subject has been very well covered. The authors do not necessarily agree with each other so we are given both authors' opinions, and this allows the critical reader to agree first with one author and then with the other.

The book will be useful as a reference book both for the allergist and the paediatrician. Common problems are dealt with in some detail, but there are chapters on ocular, otologic, and genito-urinary allergy. The dogmatism of some authors is absent so we read that bacterial allergy probably plays a role, but it is difficult to prove. Also that in serous otitis media only in a small percentage could the skin test findings be correlated with the clinical symptoms. We read that nasal polyposis is extremely rare in children and though infection and allergy may be involved, cystic fibrosis plays the major role in most children.

The book has been written specifically for the U.S.A. as far as seasonal inhalant allergens are concerned and it is only for this reason that it cannot be unreservedly recommended to all interested in paediatric allergy.

**S.S.I.E.M. Symposium No. 7. Errors of Phenylalanine Thyroxine and Testosterone Metabolism**


This is the Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Symposium of the Society of the Study of Inborn Errors of Metabolism held in July 1969, and consists of 13 brief clear papers concerned with the metabolism of phenylalanine, thyroxine, and testosterone. There is a need for this type of small volume where authoritative statements are presented in such a way that they are valuable not only to the research worker but more particularly to the general paediatrician or adult physician who wishes to keep up to date in the field.

The philosophy of screening and the problems which arise therefrom are wisely discussed, including the difficult problem of the diagnosis of phenylketonuria and the significance of hyperphenylalaninaemia. There are some useful miscellaneous papers on various biochemical aspects of mental retardation. Particularly good clear accounts of thyroid disorders in children are included. Studies on fetal and cryptorchid testes are described and it is suggested that there may be a deficiency of 3β-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase in the latter. A paper on testicular function in lower vertebrates is an unexpected contribution to a book such as this, but it raises many interesting points.

This book can be highly recommended. There is a definite need for this type of book in addition to the large textbook on inborn errors.