Book Reviews

entitled 'Immunologic Deficiency States', was reviewed by Dr. Robert A. Good and it is predictably lucid, authoritative, and up to date. A very useful appendix classifies the clinical and laboratory findings in 11 distinct syndromes of primary immunological deficiency. Other chapters discuss paediatric gynaecology, pharmacology, and surgery. The survey of paediatric gynaecological disorders ranges from the problems of neonates to those of adolescents, and is written for the practising American paediatrician. It gives a useful introduction to the diagnosis and management of intersex, but is not sufficiently detailed to be used as a reference text. Other disorders, such as amenorrhoea in adolescents, would be more likely to find their way to a gynaecologist on this side of the Atlantic.

The pharmacology section is particularly concerned with perinatal effects of drugs and gives useful information of placental transfer as well as an appendix detailing the serum half-life of various antibiotics in premature and term newborn infants.

There is a good review of recent advances in paediatric surgery, which includes a brief account of some neonatal emergencies. A chapter devoted to sex education takes a commonsense attitude but is probably more appropriate for British general practitioners and school medical officers than for paediatricians.

The 60-page Miscellany starts with a section on emergencies which again is of limited application outside America. The remainder of this chapter discusses, inter alia, the discovery of the Epstein-Barr virus and its relation to infectious mononucleosis and Burkitt’s lymphoma, the value of phototherapy in neonatal jaundice, the hazards of excessive noise, and the antenatal detection of genetic defects.

Standards of production and particularly the photographic illustrations are surprisingly poor when one considers the lavishness of much of the direct promotional material emanating from drug manufacturers. At £4, the book does not stand comparison with, for example, the Pediatric Clinics of North America or the Year Book of Pediatrics. Apart from the splendid immunology article, its main value is as a bedside book for occasional sampling.


A good case can be made for a book on disorders of adolescence. It would be of particular interest to paediatricians because they are concerned with growth and development and these are having their last fling in adolescence. Such a book should, however, focus on all parameters and their important peculiarities in this age period. Dr. Daniel’s book can hardly claim to do this.

It is divided into four sections: the essence of adolescence; problems of the adolescent patient; communication and rehabilitation; and the parents of the adolescent. The book is avowedly limited in its social scope, but in the third, mainly clinical section, it is particularly deficient both in what is included and what is omitted.

Why, in a book on adolescence, is so much space given to genetic disorders or to skin disorders, which are by no means predominant in adolescence? According to the index, nervous disorders appear on pp. 143–153, but on these pages is found a chapter on headache and convulsive disorders. And when one looks for nervous psychosomatic and adaptive disturbances, which are so important in adolescence, one finds disappointingly little on them. I can find no discussion of anorexia nervosa, appetite aberrations, or sleep disturbances. Amid some rather turgid generalizations and many irrelevances some pearls can be found, like ‘the desire for loudness’. The task of attempting to draw attention to this difficult and neglected cross-section of medicine is praiseworthy, but adolescence deserves a more comprehensive approach than can be found here.


This book deals with the effects of manipulation of the developing animal during ‘critical periods’. The use of this term is not confined to the embryological concept, as evolved by Stockard, but is extended to involve different critical events in different fields, e.g. weaning and social development, puberty and growth, etc. Many different parameters are studied, socialization of wolves, hypertensive response to salt and nephrectomy in rats of different ages, LDH response to stress, effects of sex hormones at birth on subsequent growth, the effects of irradiation of the ovary in early life on ultimate reproductive ability, adaptation to calorific loss, and systems of growth study by bone age. The papers are generally of high standard and a useful discussion is printed after most, unfortunately not all, of them. The paper by Rakusan and Poupa, dealing with morphologically defined critical periods of the cardiac response to aortic constriction is of particular value since other publications by these authors are not readily available to those reading English. Only one paper, by Grollman, deals with the effects of prenatal influences on the expression of phenotypic defects, a point emphasized by McCance in the general discussion following all the papers.

The value of conference proceedings published 3 years after the meeting is doubtful. In only two papers has some attempt been made to update the bibliography beyond 1967. This, together with its high price, will severely limit the value of the volume to most individuals.


The third International Conference on Congenital Malformations was held in the Hague in September.
1969, and the proceedings have now been published. The book, like its two predecessors, is beautifully produced, with high quality illustrations and skilled editing. It presents over 400 pages of exciting information covering all aspects of human teratology from DNA to epidemiology.

The first half of the book is concerned with cell biology, and describes laboratory work relating to cell division, the reactions of cells to one another, and communication between cells. Experiments with cell hybrids and nuclear transplantation parallel studies on racial crosses and immigrants later in the book. Some fundamental questions are discussed. Where, for example, is the point of no return in cell differentiation? Can an ovum pass its prime before fertilization?

Clinicians may find themselves more at home in the second half of the book. Dr. Maroteaux delineates the clinical features and genetics of the many conditions characterized by short-limbed dwarfism and helps us to decide, when is an achondroplastic not an achondroplastic? Dr. Cedric Carter discusses multifactorial inheritance, and Professor Polani brings us up to date on sex chromosome problems.

There are many reports on population studies of the incidence of malformations, including valuable data from Hawaii on racial crosses. Of great interest are preliminary reports of long-term current studies of factors affecting human growth and development. A very thorough study from Japan on malformations and chromosome defects in abortions reminds us that, notwithstanding the population explosion, a viable newborn human has already survived a pretty rigorous selection procedure.

The final group of papers relates to clinical management. Prenatal diagnosis has so far centred round the recognition of abnormal chromosomes and obscure metabolic disorders. It seems likely, however, that this is a field in which expansion may be confidently predicted.

Every paediatrician interested in birth defects (and which can afford not to be?) will enjoy this book.


The management of cerebral palsy has always been surrounded by a certain amount of mystique and complexity, possibly because so little is known about the effects of any particular mode of treatment in a condition with such a wide spectrum of affliction and variation in natural history. Until recent years, peripheral orthopaedic operations had been confined to a few standard procedures such as elongation of the tendo calcaneus and then only in the face of severe and disabling deformity. There was always the fear that the surgeon might make the condition worse or that the deformity would recur.

A direct approach to the analysis of spasticity, paralysis, and deformity in cerebral palsy has shown that careful surgery correctly applied at the right time can confer considerable benefit when combined with continuing treatment by physiotherapy and overall attention to the multiple aspects of the disability that these children suffer.

Dr. Keats’ book gives a careful and studied review of operative procedures and their results, and analyses the procedures described in the literature to provide the reader with an extensive potential repertoire. At the same time, he is careful to describe the indications for the procedures that he recommends and the results that may be expected of them.

All orthopaedic surgeons are likely to encounter some cerebral-palsied patients in their practice and those who join with paediatricians and physical medicine specialists or physiotherapists in the treatment of cerebral palsy will see a continuing flow of afflicted young children every year. This book provides a convenient and authoritative reference source for many operative procedures that may benefit their patients, especially in the correction and prevention of disabling deformity and the preservation of the best function that can be achieved.


It is perhaps fitting that the first volume of a series on Surgical Conditions in Infancy and Childhood should be devoted to Hirschsprung’s disease, a condition whose pathology and aetiology remained in confusion for 60 years. The solution of its nature and the principles of its treatment have only been achieved over the past 20 years, and depended very largely on the evolution of paediatric surgery as a specialty.

The book first covers the history of the disease, the basic morphology, pathology, and pathophysiology, with a study of the aetiology, followed by a general study of the symptomatology of the disease and its various presentations in infancy and in older children and adults. There follows a section on the rationale and principles of surgical treatment, an analysis of the results of the various operative procedures, and an attempt to recommend the best procedure. The author admits that personal preference still plays a large part in the choice of operation.

Though recognizing the reluctance of certain distinguished authors to equate aganglionosis with Hirschsprung’s disease, the author believes this is the most important contribution ever made in the history of the disease and has provided a firm ground for scientific and clinical development. In a review of world literature he has estimated the world incidence of the disease as well as such features as sex distribution, hereditary factors, and associated abnormalities. Quoting from Hirschsprung’s original paper he emphasizes that commonly this is a disease of the newborn and so-called pseudo-Hirschsprung’s disease, ultra short segment disease, and Hirschsprung’s disease presenting in later childhood or adult life are rare variations.

The author reviews his own series of 124 consecutive