Book Reviews


Studies sired by the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London, traditionally bear the hallmarks of erudite authority, unimpeachable method, and meticulous attention to detail. This study is no exception. It forms part of the large-scale epidemiological survey of schoolchildren resident on the Isle of Wight undertaken by Michael Rutter and his colleagues. In this, the entire population of statutory school age (almost 12,000) was screened for a variety of handicapping conditions, including neuroepileptic disorder contrasted with lesions below the brainstem, these being compared with chronic diseases not involving the CNS, e.g. asthma, diabetes, and cardiac states, the whole yielding a uniquely comprehensive compendium of clinical data. The present section, published as a double volume in the series Clinics in Developmental Medicine, deals with organic brain dysfunction in its relation to child psychiatric disorder.

Does such dysfunction pre dispose to psychological disturbance and, if so, can this be solely attributed to the presence of physical handicap, or is it specifically related to disorder of the brain? Are there, in fact, specific patterns of psychiatric disorder associated with organic brain lesions? These, and related areas of inquiry, are explored, for we are reminded that few hard facts have so far emerged in this sphere despite a plethora of papers which are both skilfully and critically reviewed. The point is also made that as the acute field of paediatric disease comes progressively under control, more and more emphasis will be laid upon these more chronic group of neuroepileptic disorders and especially upon their social, educational, and behavioural concomitants, as reflected in recent legislation.

The volume is introduced by Professor Birch of Yeshiva University, New York, as fulfilling the need for "a detailed body of normative information on the neurological and behavioural characteristics of a representative ... population of children". In so doing, it "provides a model for (extended) neuro-behavioural enquiry". The book should, therefore, be of interest to a variety of disciplines: paediatricians, neurologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, educationalists, and sociologists, each of whom must surely find something of value among the wealth of data presented and the conclusions that emerge, some at variance with traditional views.

Though perhaps a shade expensive, the publication is beautifully produced, and the sections on neurological and psychiatric assessment, which detail the clinically based schemata adopted in the survey, may well be regarded as an additional bonus, to be read with profit by clinicians (medical and non-medical) involved in this sphere of work. To them, in particular, the book is unreservedly commended.


This volume is the second in a series of annual reviews on Mental Retardation. Some chapters, like Brian Kirman's on 'Clinical Aspects' and Kyrja Voeller's on 'Neurology', mainly recount very recent developments. Others, like L. I. Wool's on phenylketonuria and phenylalaninaemia, provide a more overall view of a subject. The editor, J. Wortis, introduces the book with a lucid and helpful article entitled 'What is Mental Retardation?' He makes the rather surprising remark that 'Medical clinical practice would do well to focus its interest mainly on the biological types of retardation and limit its involvement with psychosocial types to differential diagnostic tasks'. Happily this implied withdrawal of the doctor from the social and community aspects of mental retardation is not reflected in Dr. Wortis's choice of chapters for this book, which include 'Pedagogy' (a singularly unfelicitous choice of title for an excellent article); 'Nutrition', 'Social Work', 'Parent Organizations', and 'Architecture'. The last is a remarkable chapter opening with the words 'If you wouldn't design it for your own home and family, don't design it for the retarded.' The illustrations should make us hang our heads in shame at much of the provision for the retarded in this country.

The impression left by this generally excellent volume is profoundly encouraging; one feels that the last few years have seen a collective pulling up of socks by everyone working in this field. The approach to it has become at once more scientific, human, lively, and hopeful. We look forward to further volumes in this series.


There are over 40 papers in the first Symposium; about one-third are in German with English summaries. The Symposium covers a very wide range of subjects including asthma, bronchitis, scoliosis, and cystic fibrosis, with papers reporting development of the lung, pathology, pulmonary function tests, epidemiology, bacteriology, and therapy. The scope is too broad to offer a comprehensive up-to-date coverage of all these fields. There are useful papers on the long-term prognosis in asthma and also on the use of steroids in
asthma, though no new striking information comes to light.

The second Symposium opens with an interesting description of the discovery and development of the drug and a useful discussion of its mode of action. It prevents degradation of mast cells and release of constrictor substances and diminishes sensitivity to histamine. A series of 10 papers follow, 4 in English and the remainder with English translations, mainly outlining clinical trials. These confirm that the drug has a valuable role and is more useful in the labile asthmatic with relatively good ventilatory function between attacks, especially in subjects showing sensitivity to allergens.


This 400-page conference report contains some 40 contributions on various aspects of cystic fibrosis presented by an international panel of scientists and clinicians. The first part of the book deals with recent research into the molecular abnormality underlying the disease manifestations, both laboratory and clinical. Thereafter, a wide range of topics is reviewed including fetal and infant screening for the affection, heterozygote detection, the property and behaviour of aerosols, the microbiology and chemotherapy of respiratory tract involvement, studies on pulmonary, intestinal, and genital function, the effects of the disease on lung growth and structure and on cardiac function, and finally the feasibility of lung transplantation.

The discussions following each paper make interesting reading and add greatly to the individual presentations. An evening session of the Conference was devoted to a consideration of the therapeutic and prophylactic use of mist tents and the 20-page account of this topical and controversial subject is perhaps one of the highlights of the publication, at least for the clinically orientated reader.

Although most aspects of cystic fibrosis are covered in this comprehensive review there is one notable omission which did not escape the notice of Professor Harry Medovoy at the time. Thus, in his Concluding Address to the Conference, he rightly commented that future Cystic Fibrosis Conferences should not neglect the emotional aspects of this complicated chronic disease of global distribution.

One must praise the Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust for sponsoring these major international conferences and congratulate David Lawson, the editor, for producing such an interesting and readable account within 3 months of the occasion.

This book can certainly be recommended to paediatricians, but perhaps it should be said that a knowledge of current views on the structure and function of cell components is desirable if the reader wishes to make the best of the earlier pages dealing with basic defects.


The first volume of the history of the British Paediatric Association covered the first 25 years (1928-1952) and was written by Dr. Hector Cameron. The second volume (1952-1968) has been written by Professor Victor Neale and represents his last contribution to paediatrics; he died shortly after completing the manuscript and the final editing was undertaken by Dr. A. W. Franklin.

In the main this second volume follows closely on the lines of its predecessor, giving details of the annual meetings of the Association and obituaries of the 40 members who had died during the past 16 years. There are, however, a number of noteworthy differences. The tempo in paediatrics has increased rapidly and this is reflected in the activities of the Association. In particular the formation of an Academic Board has added to the Scientific concentration. This is evident from the subjects discussed at the annual meetings, which show the widening scope of paediatrics; this is also made clear in the selections given in Appendix 1. The second appendix records the names of the 56 original members and the third is a graph showing the remarkable growth of the Association, since its beginning. The fourth Appendix gives a list of the memoranda published by the Association.

The value of the book is enhanced by the provision of an outstandingly good index which covers both volumes: the only omission of note was any reference to the Ulster Cup, for so long one of the highlights of the annual meetings, but perhaps this is in keeping with the scientific maturation of the Association.

The frontispiece photograph of Donald Paterson is both excellent and appropriate. In the first volume there were some gaps among the presidential photographs but in this one they are complete. There is also a group of the 1937 Windermere gathering and a view of the Royal Hotel at Scarborough which complements that of the Old England Hotel at Windermere shown in volume 1.

This book will be welcomed by all members of the Association and they will think even more kindly of Victor Neale for having provided them with such a satisfying historical portrayal of the steadily spreading influence of the Association.


This welcome volume details the author's wide experience in the complicated case of 430 children with spina bifida cystica over many years at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. In the hospital the annual number of children coming under treatment since 1961 has doubled, compared with the figures for the previous decade, while the death rate by the age of 3 years has dropped from 62% to 43%. Probably the increase