

Book Reviews

Sudden and Unexpected Deaths in Infancy (Cot Deaths). Edited by FRANCIS E. CAMPS and R. G. CARPENTER. (Pp. 128; 24 illustrations + 14 tables. £2.00.) Bristol: John Wright. 1972.

This is a report of the Proceedings of the Sir Samuel Bedson Symposium held in Cambridge in April 1970. The 30 participants included 7 paediatricians. In the 2-day meeting it was possible to review most of the medical knowledge of sudden infant death and to collate the various theories concerning the cause and mode of death. The 14 papers consider the epidemiology of these deaths: milk hypersensitivity, immunology, respiratory virology, respiratory reflexes, airway obstruction, and inborn errors of metabolism. Appendices deal with nasal obstruction as a cause of death, a technique for examining the nose of the infant at necropsy and early indicators such as respiratory distress in the neonatal period and low tactile-adaptive scores; the fourth appendix is a helpful article prepared by J. L. Emery for bereaved parents. The book is well illustrated and has a useful bibliography.

At necropsy this is 'a syndrome of nothingness, by and large' and the participants were aware that they were possibly dealing with several different conditions, or a condition in which a single mode of death may be sparked off by different causes, or a condition consisting of multiple factors working in various combinations, some of which may prove fatal. Among the important points to emerge was the need to define the condition and to have a standard description on death certificates. One valuable outcome of the symposium was the establishment of a foundation to support and co-ordinate research, to collect and administer funds, to be a centre for information, to promote aftercare of the families, and to communicate and exchange information with other countries.

The results of several investigations may be of importance to infant care even if they do not ultimately prove to be a major cause of sudden infant death, and there is a great deal in this book to interest paediatricians, pathologists, epidemiologists, and other medical scientists. The wide-ranging discussion is reported in full and provides several pointers for future research.

Hematologic Problems in the Newborn. 2nd Edition. Vol. IV in Major Problems in Clinical Pediatrics. By FRANK A. OSKI and J. LAURENCE NALMAN. (Pp. xiv + 400; illustrated + tables. £5.35.) Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders. 1972.

The first edition of this book appeared in 1966, and advances in a number of aspects of this subject have meant that a great deal of this book is new. Coagulation

defects including disseminated intravascular coagulation, fetal blood transfusion, and the prevention of rhesus disease by giving anti-D to the mother, are some of the subjects which have burgeoned in the 6 years since the last edition.

As a compendium of facts and a source of references to the literature, this book could be useful. It might have been even more useful if the authors had been able to temper the facts by giving us more of their personal experience. A surprising and regrettable omission is any reference whatever to the premature baby and anaemia.

Herpes Simplex Varicella and Zoster. Clinical Manifestations and Treatment. By B. E. JUEL-JENSEN and F. O. MACCALLUM. (Pp. xi + 194; illustrated + tables. £3.50.) London: Heinemann. 1972.

The curious relation existing between varicella and zoster, and the puzzling phenomenon of the common recurring herpes simplex have always been intriguing matters, but it is the fact that chemotherapeutic agents are now available which are active against these viruses, with the consequent crucial need for early diagnosis of a disease such as herpetic encephalitis, that makes this monograph so timely. It is written for clinicians by a clinician and a virologist, both of whom have contributed much to recent knowledge of the subject and especially to therapeutic aspects. They have here made available an immense amount of valuable first-hand experience. The authors are highly cautious in evaluating the effectiveness of chemotherapy in herpetic encephalitis, but lean to preferring one of the cytidine analogues (cytosine or adenosine arabinoside) to idoxuridine.

The illustrations of the numerous clinical manifestations of zoster and varicella are excellent. Unquestionably a most valuable book for the clinician.

Human Growth Hormone. Edited by A. STUART MASON. (Pp. v + 201; illustrated + tables. £3.75.) London: Heinemann. 1972.

One's first reaction to this small slim volume is to wonder at the economics of the book trade: £3.75 for 201 small pages. This is quickly replaced by puzzlement at why yet another review volume should appear which deals with topics already generously covered in the literature. Putting these criticisms temporarily to one side, there is much in the book which is commendable. It consists of 6 chapters each written

authoritatively. They deal with the preparation of human growth hormone and methods for its assay in biological fluids, the metabolic actions of growth hormone, its interactions with other hormones, the treatment of dwarfism with growth hormone, and the problems that result from the development of antibodies to the hormone during therapeutic use. Each chapter is succinct and, most important, backed up by a comprehensive bibliography. Two of the chapters, dealing with the preparation of growth hormone and its assay, are complemented by technical appendices. These are inappropriate to a book of this scope for most of those concerned with the extraction and measurement of growth hormone will choose to work from more authoritative sources than this book.

If the book were half the price and thereby presumably paper backed it could be recommended as a worth-while purchase for endocrinologists and paediatricians with a developing or established interest in the hormone. As it is, the volume will find a justified place on the shelves of medical and biological libraries where it will be consulted with gratification by those who want a quick entrée into the topics it covers.

Pediatric Therapy. 4th ed. Edited by HARRY C. SHIRKEY. (Pp. xxiii + 1221; 443 illustrations + tables. £15.50.) London: Henry Kimpton; St. Louis: Mosby. 1971.

Writing on another book on paediatric therapy 2 years ago, our reviewer wrote '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.' The volume edited by Dr. Shirkey and written by 96 contributors is large, elegant, and magnificently produced. 300 pages are devoted to general principles and methods of treatment, approximately 800 to treatment of specific disorders, and there are valuable and detailed sections distinguished by coloured pages on poisoning and on drug dosage and use. There are excellent cross-references.

The question still remains as to whether a book on therapy is worth while. Most paediatricians will have arrived at a strategy for dealing with the common disorders they meet, and they will only change this in response to a really well-argued original paper showing that a particular method of treatment is better than what they already do. They are therefore likely to consult a book on therapy mostly in relation to rare disorders. Here they may be disappointed: on histiocytosis X, for example, there are three very short sections which will tell few paediatricians more than they know already. For the less experienced paediatrician the book also has limitations as a guide to management. Will he be satisfied with febrile convulsions being discussed in two sentences—'Febrile convulsions are managed in no different manner than are the afebrile variety. Anti-convulsants are introduced with the first seizure'. The initiated will note that Dr. Sidney Carter is co-author of this chapter, and will remember the impression made by his paper 'Management of the child who

has had one convulsion' (*Pediatrics*, **33**, 431, 1964). But one hears the distraught resident on Saturday night saying 'But Dr. Carter, what do I say to the parents? And what do they do if he gets another fever? Or another fit?'

There are other articles which present too personal a point of view to be accepted as standard statements of current treatment. After reading Dr. Hilde Bruch's perceptive article on obesity, I felt that all the inadequacies of my treatment of this disorder had been exposed. But I also felt that my (admittedly pretty insecure) faith in dietary treatment had been destroyed without anything tangible being offered in its place. I had been told how to behave with an obese child but not how to treat him. On recurrent abdominal pain the reader is offered no guidance at all.

Yet there are very many really excellent chapters, not all of which one would think of looking up in a book on therapy. The section on 'Modification of laboratory tests caused by drugs' is a unique compilation; and Dr. James Sussex's chapter on 'Death of a child patient' is one of the most helpful practical accounts of what the paediatrician should do in relation to all the other people involved. There are more obvious pearls like Dr. Harry Schwachman and Dr. Kon Taik Khaw's account of the Boston Children's Hospital regimen for cystic fibrosis.

This is a valuable book, but it is probably better value to browse through it at leisure than to use it as a shelf bible to consult in an emergency.

The Therapeutic Choice in Paediatrics. Based on a Symposium of Medical Advisers in the Pharmaceutical Industry and the British Paediatric Association. Edited by W. L. BURLAND and B. M. LAURANCE. (Pp. xii + 228; illustrated + tables. £3.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. 1972.

A symposium is made up of varied contributions differing in content and quality, and this book, though admirably edited, reflects this characteristic. Once committed to publishing the proceedings of a symposium, the editors must accept indifferent presentations with the brilliant.

A meeting between practising paediatricians and medical advisers to the pharmaceutical industry is reported. There are sections on clinical investigations, placental transfer, action of drugs, immunization, cytotoxic therapy, and neuro- and psychopharmacology. Most of the chapters present summaries of the state of knowledge in late 1970 on a wide selection of therapeutic problems. The section on immunization presents the scientific basis of prophylaxis against the infectious fevers with evidence from experimental and field studies. The review of placental function in 3 chapters presents the modern concept of the function of the placenta in immunity and medical therapy with clarity and a wealth of evidence from original work. In the specialist chapters, acknowledged experts review briefly the field of their work. Except for a chapter on the practical implications of trials of therapy in