Book reviews

**Height and Weight of Children: Socioeconomic Status, United States.** National Center for Health Statistics. Vital and Health Statistics, Series 11, No. 119, DHEW Publication No. (HSM) 73–1601, 87 p. Health Services and Mental Health Administration, DHEW, Rockville, Maryland, 20852.


The National Center for Health Statistics has just released a second report on height and weight of U.S. children 6 to 11 years old from Cycle II of the Health Examination Survey. The first report analyzed and discussed data on height and weight by age, sex, race, and geographical region of the United States. This second report carries the analysis and discussion of height and weight data further by considering some measurable socioeconomic variables. In addition to the biological variables—age, race, and sex—additional classifications by the annual family income, educational attainment of parents, and an urban-rural dichotomy were used in the analysis.

For this part of the survey a nation-wide probability sample of 7417 children was selected to represent the roughly 24 million noninstitutionalized children 6 to 11 years of age in the U.S. Of these, 7119, or 96%, were examined.

A monotonic increase in both height and weight was found over the entire annual family income range reported (less than $500 to more than $15,000) and over the entire range of parents' educational level. This positive correlation of children's size with family socioeconomic status was equally true for all ages studied, both sexes, and for whites and Negroes alike. Both the well demonstrated monotonic relation and a failure to discover a good dichotomy precluded an interpretation of a 'poverty level' clearly affecting the heights and weights of U.S. children.

In gauging the magnitude of these differences of size by comparison with sizes of children from other countries, it was found that the differences between the sizes of U.S. children from the socioeconomic extremes, though real, were extremely small, and that even the children from the very lowest socioeconomic stratum in the U.S. were much larger than most of the children from all the countries of the world except from those countries most culturally and technologically similar to the United States.

*Editor's note: This account is not a book review, but an abstract supplied by the National Center for Health Statistics, which we thought would be of interest to readers.


Previous editions of this book were published in 1960 and 1966 and have provided the clinician with the kind of textbook of paediatric haematology appropriate to his needs. Confronted with some rare blood condition and wondering where to go for information, the paediatrician seldom finds 'Carl Smith' to fail him. Difficult decisions—for example, whether to advise splenectomy for a child with severe thrombocytopenic purpura—are discussed judiciously, though one could perhaps wish that the author more often gave us the benefit of his personal experience in such matters.

During the 6 years since the last edition immunology has made large strides and has influenced very many aspects of haematology, so it is in these fields particularly that much of the up-dating of the new edition is to be found, though the book as a whole contains a great deal of new material (and an additional 1200 references).

Despite the regretted death recently of Dr. Carl Smith, paediatricians everywhere must hope that his fine textbook will continue to be kept up to date.