Book reviews


No short review could possibly do justice to this magnificent book. The previous editions must be familiar to all radiologists and most paediatricians. The 1600-odd pages cover the radiology of all parts of the body, including specialized techniques. Every page has several illustrations. Not only are the x-rays beautifully produced, but the clarity of the exposition is greatly added to by numerous nonradiographic illustrations, such as line-drawings. As a sample, the reader can examine the 30 pages on the normal skull. After studying the line-drawings, photographs of skulls, and radiographs side-by-side, no paediatrician could fail to get more out of seeing the skull x-rays of his patients. The book is full of information about paediatric disorders in general as well as the radiological findings. The love and enthusiasm which have gone into the book's preparation come out in Dr. Caffey's preface "There is that which is new and interesting and much that is old and interesting in this sixth edition."

The preface sounds a warning which should be of even more direct concern to paediatricians than to radiologists. It largely discusses the long-term hazards of ionizing radiation, and the fact that children are often x-rayed on slender clinical indications. Dr. Caffey's suggestion that 20 to 30% of x-ray exposures in children could be eliminated without loss of useful diagnostic information does not sound overstated. Perhaps the thought for the week for paediatricians should be that 'excretory urograms in girls probably carry more potential hazard than any other diagnostic roentgen procedure now commonly applied to children'.

This book is not just one for every radiological and paediatric department library—it is also a mine of information and enjoyment for the paediatrician who can afford to possess it.


This book may prove to have been particularly well timed, based as it is on the last decade or so of intensive research on fetal growth. Until quite recently that research has had to depend essentially on observations made on babies after they were born. The relative effects on the growth of the fetus by (a) its genetic constitution and (b) the intrauterine environment in which it has been nurtured, have been inferred simply from observing it at the end of its intrauterine stay, whether that be long or short. This is akin to looking at a traveller newly arrived after a long journey, and trying to guess how long he has been travelling, what his diet has been, and what the climate has been like in the various parts where he has sojourned.

Certainly some ingenious approaches have been used to overcome in part the frustratingly severe limitations imposed by this situation, and the Ounsted's own meticulous study of the inherited maternal factors which constrain fetal growth provide a notable example of these. Nevertheless it seems likely that most of the useful information about fetal growth that is discoverable from observations of the baby after birth may already have been achieved. Hopefully such new approaches as that provided by ultrasonics are now about to open a new chapter, so that we shall not always have to wait for the fetus to emerge before being able to weigh or measure him.

Before these new techniques become commonplace, as no doubt they will, it is therefore timely to have this excellent account of the present state of knowledge presented in an attractive way.

In Chapter 6, entitled 'Hypotheses', the two authors develop some of their own interesting speculative ideas concerning the effect of the Y chromosome on fetal growth; and their work in this field, though not always easy to grasp at first reading (e.g. 'The Y chromosome causes the genomic messages to occur at a slower ontogenetic pace in males') is well worth making the effort to understand.

This book is a notable addition to the admirable series of Clinics in Developmental Medicine, for which we have to thank Spastics International Medical Publications.


This book is a comprehensive survey of our present-day knowledge of intrauterine infections. It begins with an article by Marshall stressing the damage that intrauterine rubella infection may produce beyond the organogenesis period. Reference is made to prognosis. Hanshaw and his colleagues deal with the other main virus infection of the fetus, cytomegalovirus. The authors attempt to estimate the prevalence of cytomegalovirus in pregnancy and its likely effect on the infant. The excretion of cytomegalovirus and the significance of antibody both in mother and baby is fully
considered. The authors indicate where our ignorance lies, particularly in the relation of clinical or subclinical infection in the mother to fetal damage.

Fleck adequately covers toxoplasmosis infection. Though in Britain the incidence of congenital disease severe enough to produce illness is only one in about 20,000 pregnancies, it is probably of more importance than syphilis. It may be spread by the faeces of kittens and by the consumption of raw meat, which suggests possible preventive measures in the absence of effective treatment.

Tobin gives a concise review of the laboratory diagnosis, mainly emphasizing immunological aspects; but one is left a little in doubt of the significance of IgM responses and whether they only occur in primary infections. One also regrets the concentration solely on rubella and cytomegalovirus.

Banatvala considers fetal interferon responses to rubella virus. He used various strains of rubella virus, including Japanese strains because of the infrequency of congenital abnormalities there. He showed that Japanese strains produced high levels of infection in placental cultures, but in fetal lung and leucocyte cultures production was the same with all strains. There was no evidence of different antigenic types.

Desmyter and his colleagues consider the congenital transmission of viral hepatitis type B. It is a difficult article to follow, as not all the evidence is presented and therefore, without previous detailed knowledge of the subject, the conclusions that are drawn might not be obvious to all. However, these defects are remedied by an excellent discussion.

Coid's article is useful and refreshing on comparative aspects of infection during pregnancy and he makes useful suggestions for the possible introduction of further comparative animal studies. The place of bacterial intrauterine infection is considered by Gamsu, with special reference to diagnosis of infections and their mode of invasion. The epidemiological approach to intrauterine infections is considered by Butler, using influenza and haemopoetic neoplasms as the example. McCarthy discusses the mechanisms underlying the spread of rubella virus to the human fetus, which are not yet fully understood.

Future developments in prophylaxis is considered by Dudgen, who points out the difficulty of controlling CMV and discusses the possibility of a CMV vaccine. Dudgen, as Chairman, then gives an excellent summary of the proceedings, and the book ends with the unusual step of making recommendations on (i) the overall problem, (ii) the recognition of intrauterine infection, (iii) laboratory studies, (iv) pathogenesis and comparative studies, and (v) control.

Every section is followed by a first-rate discussion which supplements any shortcomings of individual papers. One perhaps should express some regret that agents such as Coxsackie virus and mumps are given little mention. This book is beautifully produced, easy to read, and should be of great benefit to paediatricians, obstetricians, and general practitioners.


Schulman turns appropriately to Nigeria for an account of malaria, and to Israel for disorders of glycogen metabolism, leaving 8 other topics to the U.S.A. Leukaemologists, who have long been sustained by faith, hope, and charity, are living increasingly on optimism, and Simone of Memphis shows some reason for this. His immaculate trials of combined chemotherapy for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, like those of others, show encouraging results when combined with irradiation of the nervous system. Whether his predictions are more accurate than the population projections of other planners, time will soon show. Especially interesting is his need, as numbers grow, to use nurses to do marrow and lumbar punctures—a widening of their bedside responsibilities in which we might find an alternative to promotion by administration.

Respect for a patient's sleep has long been a mark of good medicine, and Soyka of Chicago argues ably, but not quite convincingly, that the natural evening trough of adrenal activity should be left undisturbed in timing steroid therapy. The principle is important, and it may soon be as natural to tailor cytotoxic or bacterial drugs to the body's rhythm as a diabetic's insulin and food is adjusted to his activity. In the future too, for British paediatricians, may lie the drug abuses whose management is discussed in daunting detail by Block of Philadelphia.

Moses and Gutman give an excellent account of inborn errors of glycogen metabolism, many of which are sufficiently defined for this to be a useful guide for years to come. The place of androgens in development, the metabolism of bilirubin at birth, and the function of platelets are less well understood, but useful accounts come from Chicago, San Francisco, and Denver. Perhaps they await the breakthrough which has revolutionized immunology, and which sets Henley's chapter on immunoglobulins on a footing secure enough to keep us up with the medical students.

The greatest problem facing paediatricians is the prevention of mental retardation. Goodman of Denver touches only on that part due to faulty genes in a chapter ranging from termination, the therapy of defeat, to distant prospects of enzyme infusion and induction.

In a welcome clinical chapter, Ransome-Kuti discusses malaria in an area where eradication has failed and where attempts at prevention have changed the patterns of immunity and presentation. The emphasis is on drugs, and it would be interesting to know the author's experience of heparin in cerebral malaria and of haematins between the attacks.

The standard of previous volumes is maintained, and libraries should have the book. For the individual, $8.75 would be better spent on a subscription to the New England Journal of Medicine, which has contained much of this material in a more palatable, though less accessible, form already.