

Book reviews

Bladder Control and Enuresis. Clinics in Developmental Medicine No. 48/49. Edited by I. KOLVIN, R. C. MAC KEITH, and S. R. MEADOW. (Pp. xvi + 328; illustrated + tables. £6.20.) Philadelphia: Lippincott; London: Spastics International Medical Publications with Heinemann. 1973.

Like poverty, enuresis is always with us, and like poverty is inclined to become semi-political with contending theory and belief. And so a new monograph might be greeted with glazed resignation rather than with eager hope. But enuresis, too, has its liberals and where else than to the Clinics in Developmental Medicine should one look for news (in the real sense) on this hoary subject? (In passing, what a good series this is; well informed and balanced surveys of material ill-served elsewhere.)

Aptly dedicated 'to our mothers', these 300 pages are subdivided into sections, each with several contributors, dealing respectively with physiology, epidemiology, special syndromes, associations, psychological factors, theories of causation, management, and the future. One quarter of the contributors are from overseas. The work is unified by the successful intent to scrutinize every aspect more deeply and more critically than usual, and any bias there may be is towards the practical. It contains some excellent reviews: let me single out a few of the 32 contributors for special mention. 'How children become dry' (Mac Keith and colleagues) is a concentrated study of the behaviour of normal children, casting reflected light on reasons for persistence of bed-wetting. An appendix on the behaviour of piglets ('unfortunately a small proportion of pigs do not conform') should not be missed. Cooper's short chapter on cross-cultural patterns reminds us that enuresis is world-wide despite the bizzarrest regimens. De Jonge's discussion of the urethral (urge) syndrome is revealing about an undervalued process. Bakwin succeeds in making a family history scientifically respectable. Salmon and colleagues carve their way elegantly and ruthlessly through the conceptual incoherence linking enuresis with epilepsy. A fine chapter, disciplined and clear, has been written by Shaffer, who reviews the literature associating enuresis with emotional disorder and attempts to find answers to practical questions. Meadow's article on patient management is so good that some enuretics might be cured just by having it read to them. Likewise, the two chapters on conditioning and treatment (respectively by Turner and Dische) are valuable and fresh, full of advice drawn from experience, I found disappointing the section on future research, though it was given much space. It comes back to

Mac Keith's earlier admonition to 'think about dryness'. Also disappointing were some of the contributions from psychiatrists in which showers of ideas were so folded around with reservations that there seemed little toothpaste from overlarge tubes. The issue from the complex statistical study of Kolvin and colleagues is particularly mouse-like.

In sum, this is an important book compounded of originality, scholarship, and entertainment. It has reinvested the subject of enuresis with intellectual glamour. As the waterfall on the cover suggests, when this cataract of ideas falls upon the still pool of receptive readers, there should be a most beneficial spray, much of which should fall ultimately upon the patients.

Scientific Foundations of Paediatrics. Edited by JOHN A. DAVIS and JOHN DOBBING. (Pp. xvi + 836; illustrated + tables. £12.00.) London: Heinemann. 1974.

The editors deserve great credit for the way they have brought together in one volume basic information on which good paediatric practice may be based.

Growth and development from conception to puberty are considered by 60 contributors, including the geneticist, embryologist, anatomist, biochemist, physiologist, psychologist, and psychiatrist as well as by the specialized paediatrician, paediatric nurse, and a mother. Function of the whole fetus, infant, and child is considered in relation to the function of individual organs and to the climacteric periods of birth and puberty. Included are sections on epidemiology of paediatric disorders, circadian rhythms, oncology, bacteriology, and pharmacology.

The maternal/infant relationship has quite rightly been considered in terms of normal emotional and physical development of the child. One minor criticism would be the absence of more detailed consideration of the maternal/fetal relationship, placental function, and the control of intrauterine growth and development. Discussion might also be expanded to include the influence of hypothalamic and pituitary functions on growth and development of fetus and child.

This book achieves what it sets out to do, namely, to explain the 'scientific foundations of paediatrics'. It is essential reading for all engaged in research into human growth and development and highly recommended for all paediatricians because it provides a rewarding understanding of much current paediatric practice. The quality of the publication and its content makes it a good buy at £12.