Book reviews

reservations about the book it is because of statements like '. . . d-transposition is synonymous with complete transposition', '. . . in the fetus half the IVC return goes through the liver', '. . . the systemic vascular resistance is 10 times pulmonary vascular resistance'. In the section on the Eisenmenger syndrome the importance of oxygen administration to see if any of the raised pulmonary vascular resistance is reversible, is, in the reviewer's opinion, of sufficient importance to have been included.

In summary, this is a useful and practical book with clear guidelines for practising paediatricians but with a few minor lapses in accuracy.


This book will be of great use to two groups of readers: first it is sufficiently comprehensive for the specialist paediatrician and biochemist who are actively involved in the study and management of patients with amino acid disorders, and secondly parts of the book will be welcomed by the more general reader (both clinician and biochemist) who feels he has been left behind by the tremendous advances in the field of inborn errors of metabolism.

The work is divided into three sections, the first being a discussion of the biochemistry, nutritional aspects, and methods of analysis of amino acids. This is a very readable section, starting with the general properties of amino acids and ending in an excellent review of the available methods of amino acid analysis together with a discussion on screening and diagnosis. The second part is short and deals with the transport of amino acids and their associated disorders. This may be of little interest to the general clinician and is really intended for the specialist.

The largest section consists of a series of chapters, each devoted to specific amino acids and their associated disorders and will be of great value to those actively engaged in the diagnosis and management of metabolic disorders. For example, the chapter on sulphur amino acids provides a detailed and lucid account of their metabolism followed by an extensive discussion of clinical and biochemical findings of the homocystinurias and other disorders. A notable omission is that of neonatal methioninaemia which would have been a useful addition to this chapter.

The final chapter is devoted to Vitamin Responsive Disorders. Clinicians are becoming increasingly aware of these, no doubt because they are potentially treatable and this chapter not only emphasizes the importance of the heterogeneity among these diseases but also provides a useful guide to their investigation and management. This book is extremely readable with an ample number of good illustrations and useful tables. There is also a good balance between basic biochemistry essential to the complete understanding of the aminoacidopathies and information on diagnosis, treatment, and management of the most recently described conditions.


This book records the proceedings of a symposium on endocrine abnormalities in malnourished children which was held in May 1973 at the Kroc Institute, California. The main object of the symposium was to allow workers in different parts of the world to compare their findings, and the book presents 27 papers given by invited participants from 12 countries. These papers and the subsequent discussions cover the effects of malnutrition on growth hormone secretion, adrenal cortical and medullary function, carbohydrate metabolism, and thyroid function. There are also contributions on catch-up growth during recovery, malnutrition due to psychosocial deprivation, and the relation between nutrition and diabetes.

It is unlikely that this book will appeal to the general reader. The editors have not attempted to summarize the proceedings and a reader searching for guidance through the maze of endocrine abnormalities found in severe malnutrition will probably be disappointed. He will, however, learn of the difficulties which can arise when results obtained under different conditions in different countries are compared. Those with an active interest in the metabolic and endocrine aspects of malnutrition will probably find the book of more value. Even though the data in many of the papers have already been published elsewhere, the book is a useful subject index and a comprehensive bibliography.