

Book reviews

Physiotherapy in Paediatrics. By ROBERTA SHEPHERD. (Pp. viii+428; 170 figures & appendix. £5.00.) London: Heinemann, 1975.

This book is intended to be an introduction to the specialized forms of physiotherapy necessary for the treatment of young children. It is mainly concerned with congenital and developmental abnormalities, together with the more common orthopaedic and respiratory disorders. A large portion of the work is devoted to the examination and assessment of the child's condition, indicating to the student the detailed knowledge which is necessary in order to plan his long-term management. Sample case histories and their relevant assessments would have helped to illustrate its application.

There is an excellent bibliography to each chapter suggesting where the student may seek further information for her own personal study. She is left, however, to discover and judge for herself the various specialized techniques for treating neurological handicaps, to explore the methods of teaching walking to the spina bifida child and the principles of prescribing his appliances. The section devoted to acute and chronic respiratory conditions gives well detailed description of techniques designed to keep the airways clear and promote good lung function in various circumstances.

There is a wealth of illustrations which are of varying quality. Further careful editing and revision of the text to remove tedious repetition would greatly enhance the work before it goes into a second edition, as it surely will.

The Child with Abdominal Pains. 2nd edition. By JOHN APLEY. (Pp. x +117; 8 figures +19 tables. £2.50.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1975.

It is not usually thought necessary to review second and subsequent editions of books unless there has been a major change in content. All that was said about this excellent monograph in our original review (Archives, 1961, 36, 112) remains entirely true. However, a new generation of paediatricians may not all be aware of Dr. Apley's book, and it would be a pity not to draw their attention to much the best discussion that has been written of the commonest problem they will see in their outpatient clinics. Many of them may be startled by Dr. Apley's introductory statement that, 'I find recurrent abdominal pain to be one of the most attractive and stimulating ingredients of paediatric practice'—for many will have regarded it as a tedious and rather intractable

problem. However, no one could read this very readable book without understanding the problem far better, and feeling less of a lowering of the spirits when he discovers that the next child is complaining of abdominal pain. It provides a remarkable combination of a carefully carried-out epidemiological study of recurrent abdominal pain (prevalence 11% in schoolchildren) with individual case histories told with considerable warmth and insight. The author's approach to the psychosocial handling of the child and family when there is no detectable physical cause for the pain (the great majority of cases) is clearly described. The book is full of wise aphorisms such as, 'Effective treatment starts with the first words spoken at the first consultation'. This monograph could also be used as a model of how to present a clinical research study—clearly, concisely, interestingly, and enjoyably. It really is a book which everyone entering or practising paediatrics should read.

Clinical Perinatology. Edited by SILVIO ALADJEM and AUDREY K. BROWN. (Pp. xvi+492; illustrated +tables. £18.75.) St. Louis: Mosby; London: Kimpton, 1974.

This book contains chapters on a variety of topics of current interest in perinatology, each by a different author(s). Two deal with physiological changes in the mother; three with direct diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to the fetus, including genetic diagnosis with a view to selective abortion. There are chapters on labour, on placentation, on placental insufficiency, on adaptation to extrauterine life, on perinatal pathology (*sic*), on mortality and morbidity in fetuses and infants. There is a useful but wordy chapter on the law as it affects the fetus. In general, the subject matter is up to date and useful to the practising paediatrician or obstetrician who wants to know what is new in perinatology. Much of it is a mere catalogue with very little explanation of what lies behind the procedures referred to. The book lacks any pretence at cohesion: it is just a collection of review papers of uneven quality. It is never inspiring, never critical, seldom thought-provoking. It may well have a brief, but quite useful life-span before being replaced by another more current compendium. It is not a book to keep, and ideally such a volume should be produced on cheap paper with soft covers. Instead, we are presented with the most solid of hard backs, the glossiest of pages—veritable tablets; and at a cost of £18.75 no less. Only the well-subsidized are likely to find it worthwhile.