

Modern Radiotherapy and Oncology. Malignant Diseases in Children. Edited by THOMAS J. DEELEY. (Pp. xi + 512; illustrated + tables. £9.80.) London: Butterworths. 1974.

This book is a multi-author text with chapters on the common tumours of childhood and also on some of the rarer ones. There are chapters on the incidence and importance of malignancy in childhood, tumour registries, pathology, and diagnostic radiology. Other authors cover immunology, the use of radioisotopes, growth impairment after irradiation, and radiation carcinogenesis. There is also a chapter devoted to the sick child in hospital. There is great variation in the quality of individual chapters and some of the contributors rely heavily on references to published work from other centres rather than on personal experience when discussing methods of treatment. Little comment is made about multi-modal protocols of therapy, and hence there is a tendency to a more pessimistic prognosis than is warranted at present.

The chapter on the management of acute leukaemia suffers from the problem of the author having to try to cram too much information into the space allocated, but does succeed in giving a good resumé of present protocols and emphasizes the optimistic outlook. The chapter by the same author on chemotherapy is also a succinct review. There is an excellent chapter on malignant lymphomas in childhood which summarizes the recent changes and advances in management. The careful analysis of results from the author's own institution and comparisons with other series will help the reader to establish a policy of treatment in these diseases. The chapter on the incidence and importance of paediatric malignancy emphasizes the epidemiological significance of these diseases and shows how their implications spread beyond the patient and can act as an index of other malignancies and other diseases in relatives. This broad approach is needed if we are to improve prognosis further. This book should prove to be a very useful textbook for those with an interest in paediatric oncology. Those who are closely involved in the work are unlikely to find any very new information, but rather a well summarized collection of established data and methods of treatment.

A Study on the Origins of Mental Retardation. Clinics in Developmental Medicine No. 51. By MATTI ILVANAINEN. (Pp. x + 173; 56 figures + tables. £4.40.) London: Spastics International Medical Publications with Heinemann; Philadelphia: Lippincott. 1974.

This monograph describes a clinical and radiological study of 338 institutionalized patients with mental retardation. Nearly all had IQs of less than 50, and the majority were profoundly retarded. The account is long, detailed, and not very easy to extract the main message from, and the absence of chapter summaries or a proper summary at the end does not help. The main

conclusions appear to be, firstly, that it is possible to make an aetiological diagnosis in a high proportion of cases of mental retardation, and secondly that air encephalography shows striking abnormalities in many severely mentally retarded people. The second point is made elegantly and convincingly, with beautiful illustrations. The first is less convincing since frequently the aetiology is defined in terms of when the cause is thought to have operated, rather than what it was, and it is not entirely clear how the author decided on the timing of the insult.

This study was a major undertaking, and the findings will interest neuroradiologists as well as be important for those concerned in surveys and research on mental retardation. The ordinary clinician concerned with mentally retarded children or adults would have been better served by a shorter and more easily digested paper in a journal, giving the main findings.

Modern Trends in Paediatrics, No. 4. Edited by JOHN APLEY. (Pp. x + 376; illustrated + tables. £7.50.) London: Butterworths. 1974.

The latest edition of *Modern Trends in Paediatrics* is again edited by John Apley. The initial 3 chapters are concerned with fetal growth and the effects of foods and drugs on the fetus and infant. The chapter on the effect of drugs by Laurence, Burland, and Harrison is probably of most value as a reference source by the practising paediatrician. Margaret Ounsted's contribution on Fetal Growth is excellent, but does overlap considerably with her chapter on the same subject in *Recent Advances in Paediatrics*.

John Raeburn has written on the present status of Antenatal Diagnosis, and P. A. Stevenson on the dramatic changes that have occurred in the management of Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia. There is a well-balanced chapter on Cystic Fibrosis by W. Morrice McCrae showing that in the last few years there has been a consolidation of our knowledge on this subject rather than any major breakthrough in antenatal diagnosis or treatment. The chapter by T. M. Barratt on the Assessment of Renal Function in Childhood will be of particular value to those who have to interpret results on infants.

Christopher Wood's contribution on Immunobiology problems is easy to read, but again, it is perhaps a pity that much of this has recently been published in *Recent Advances in Paediatrics*. The chapter on Endocrinology reviews the interest in the hypothalamus-releasing hormones, the interaction of parathyroid hormone, thyrocalcitonin, and vitamin D, and current thinking on the sulphation factor. Other topics covered in this book are the emotional aspects of injury, aetiology of pyloric stenosis, and training and ethical problems in paediatrics.

This is a well-balanced selection of review articles. The chapters on renal functions and drugs will be of considerable value for rapid reference. I suspect that at £7.50 this will be a book that paediatricians will wish to have access to rather than to buy themselves.