basic subjects such as the cardiopulmonary system, surfactant systems, energy metabolism, acid base balance, water and electrolyte balance, are followed by practical instructions on problems in the newborn such as babies with asphyxia, respiratory distress, infection, and metabolic disorders. There is even a chapter on organization of services. I found it more useful for the up-to-date review of basic physiology and for the well chosen references than for the practical instructions, which, probably because they are so succinct are unbalanced. For instance, most would agree that in dealing with a seriously asphyxiated baby the first thing to do is to ensure clear airways; not many would agree that the next thing to do is to take his rectal temperature ensuring that the probe is inserted more than 5 cm! I also found it charming that a short work like this should require a foreword, a preface, a prologue and an epilogue. Fortunately each is short and to the point. I recommend this monograph to all who are involved with neonatal intensive care; to all of us who require a guide reference to up-to-date papers, graphs, and tables as a background to teaching it is a 'must'.


The clinician reading most numbers of the British Medical Bulletin is apt to feel a mixture of admiration and disappointment. The admiration is for the distinction of the contributors and their erudition. The disappointment is that the bringing together of basic scientists and scientifically inclined clinicians rarely seems to produce the hoped for synthesis which would give a coherent account of the present state of the whole subject under discussion. Too frequently the clinicians seem to be writing for their clinical colleagues an account of something which they could more readily find elsewhere, and the basic scientists seem to be talking to themselves. The somewhat austere layout of the articles with few illustrations makes the volume heavy going.

Much of this applies to the recent number on Human Malformations, and though there is a good deal of meat in it, and it will certainly be of great value to the research worker in this field, the average paediatrician would certainly find it difficult and at times confusing. The articles on prenatal diagnosis, and on the genetics of common single malformations are of interest to him but the information is available elsewhere. Professor R. W. Smithells gives an extremely useful account of present information on environmental teratogens, and Dr. P. M. Dunn gives an interesting account of congenital postural deformities. However, the more 'basic' articles on aetiology and pathogenesis, where the clinician might hope to be brought up to date with the latest developments are generally arcane and difficult and it will be a strong-minded paediatrician who gets to the end of them after a busy day's work.


The contents of this book are well described by its title. Apart from seven short general papers it is entirely made up of case reports of exceedingly rare syndromes which were presented at the 1974 Birth Defects Conference, all the contributors being from the U.S.A. In the first section 22 new familial syndromes are described for the first time, ranging from the innoxious 'Leukonychia totalis, multiple sebaceous cysts, and renal calculi' to 'Lethal faciocardiomyoclastic dysplasia'.

Although some discussion among participants is reported it would be helpful if more detailed comparisons were drawn between the new syndrome and previously described, similar conditions. The two general papers in this section are a study of malformations in the offspring of a sample of women taking anti-convulsants and some useful tables on hand measurements and the intermalleolar distance in normal and abnormal children between birth and puberty.

In the chromosome section the general papers outline possible advances in cytogenetic techniques while the case reports describe children with 14 different chromosomal abnormalities. Most of these are partial trisomies and deletions that have become identifiable as banding techniques develop. Several reports include comparisons of the findings in a number of individuals with the same anomaly.

The final section consists of single case reports and selected abstracts. It includes 47 more syndrome case reports, usually of single cases, 15 further chromosomal abnormalities and a scattering of counselling orientated abstracts. In all, this is a book for the rare syndrome specialist and for those concerned with unravelling the fundamental patterns that must underlie the chromosomal syndromes.


This Ciba Foundation Symposium is a refreshing reminder that there are interesting blood diseases in childhood besides leukaemia. A group of authoritative and active workers in the field contribute a series of well-documented texts followed by 'workshop' type discussions under the chairmanship of Professor D. J. Weatherall. Topics range from molecular, submicroscopic, cytogentic, and cell kinetic aspects to current, unresolved problems in clinical management of Diamond-Blackfan anaemia, Fanconi anaemia, dyserythropoietic anaemias, and thalassaemias. The discussions on the role of androgens in aplastic anaemia, chelating agents in reducing toxicity from chronic iron overload, the future role of marrow transplantation in some of these disorders, the ethics of antenatal diagnosis, and
even thoughts on genetic engineering in the thalassaemias will be of special interest to those engaged in or contemplating work in these areas.

For the paediatric haematologist or someone with a special interest in one of these disorders the book is difficult to lay down. For the general paediatrician there would be a number of gems of information, yet much of the book would be too specialized.

Current Problems in Pediatric Hematology.

Twelve review articles reprinted from the April and July 1975 issues of Seminars in Hematology have been brought together in a conveniently-sized book of the above title. Those who are familiar with the well-documented style of review article in Seminars in Hematology will know the degree of depth to expect, with around 50 to 150 references per article. The topics selected include a number of 'growing points' in paediatric haematology, e.g. vitamin E deficiency in 'Anemia of prematurity'; intravascular coagulation syndromes in 'The bleeding newborn'; developmental assessment in intrauterine transfusion survivors in 'Rh erythroblastosis fetalis 1975'; home treatment in 'Current concepts in the mangement of hemophilia'; hypertransfusion in 'The management of thalassemia major'; and liability to pneumococcal and other infections in 'Natural history of sickle cell disease—the first ten years'.

Other articles are almost entirely innovative, namely, 'Antenatal diagnosis of hemoglobinopathies: social and technical considerations' by Nathan and colleagues; 'Inherited defects of platelet function' by Marie Stuart; and 'Metabolism of the erythrocytes of the newborn infant' by Oski. Two unique articles, the like of which cannot be found elsewhere, are especially commendable since they include the fruits of accumulated experience though they would not claim to be innovative. The first of these is entitled 'Hematologic clues to systemic disease in childhood' by Naiman and Bergman and includes photomicrographs of such things as peripheral blood and marrow cells in various storage diseases. The other article, 'The child with lymphadenopathy' by Zuelzer, is relevant to one of the commonest day-to-day problems in paediatrics.

It is clear that this stimulating collection of articles will be of interest to many general paediatricians, neonatologists, and haematologists. It would not claim, of course, to cover the whole field of paediatric haematology.