
This book has a somewhat misleading name for the clinician as its subject matter is principally concerned with the pathophysiology of acute diarrhoea in children. Those looking for a clear guide to clinical diagnosis and management will not find it here, but those wishing to understand the mechanisms of acute diarrhoea in childhood, its pathogenesis and as a consequence, a rational basis for management, will find this book a treasure trove of information. The contributors to this symposium are all leaders in their fields. One of the notable features of this book is the significant contribution made to it by workers in the veterinary field.

The role of bacteria in the aetiology of acute diarrhoea is fully discussed with a detailed account of the modern concepts of invasiveness and enterotoxin production and their importance in pathogenesis. The role of yeasts and yeastslike cycle by cholera toxin and also by other toxins is described. Field gives an excellent account of the regulation of active transport in the small intestine, Bullen describes the latest work concerning the resistance provided by breast feeding to enteritis caused by E. coli in infancy, and there is an interesting general discussion by many of the contributors to the symposium concerning the advantages of breast milk.

The exciting new work on the role of viruses in the aetiology of acute diarrhoea is described by some of the major workers in the field including Bishop and her colleagues, Flewett, and Kapikan and his colleagues, as well as animal experimental work by Hamilton and his colleagues and veterinary observations by Woode. The vastly important practical problems in the developing world are described in a prospective study in Guatemala by Mata et al. Finally, Rohde and Northrup make a plea to take science where the diarrhoea is.

This book is essentially a work of reference and will be an invaluable source for anyone who is concerned with research in this rapidly expanding area of knowledge.

J. A. WALKER-SMITH


This excellent new textbook is, as far as I am aware, the only book on paediatric nutrition available in English. The 23 contributors discuss maternal and fetal growth, nutrition in the normal child, nutritional assessment, protein-energy malnutrition, obesity, deficiency states, fluid and electrolytes, carbohydrate, lipid and amino acid disorders, parental nutrition, and nutrition in various systemic disorders such as renal disease, coeliac disease, sugar malabsorption, protein-losing enteropathy, liver, cardiac, and renal disease, and cows' milk allergy. The social and community aspects of nutrition, the contribution of manufactured foods, and the prevention of malnutrition are also discussed. There is an interesting historical introduction. The editors have succeeded in their intention to emphasize practical details of clinical management and the principles involved. While detailed diets have, quite correctly, not been given, there is an astonishing amount of useful information available in the book.

It is up to date and fully referenced, well written, and well edited, apart from the chapter on maternal nutrition and fetal growth which could be improved by more discussion of the relevance of the great deal of information given. More emphasis might have been given to food allergy and anorexia nervosa which are only briefly considered. The discussion of dietary modification in kidney disease is inadequate, and the role of the kidney in infant nutrition and homoestasis is not mentioned. The physiology of appetite and the psychological and ethnic implications of feeding are omitted even though one is constantly aware of the difference between prescribing a diet and what is actually eaten. The effect of diet modification on the family is also important. The authors have preferred the mega to the kilojoule (kJ) throughout, presumably for very good reasons, though I suspect that most clinicians find it easier to remember that 1 kilocalorie is 4.2 kJ.

Finally, the book is well printed, attractively laid out, has a hard back, and is expensive. Perhaps a soft cover could be produced to reduce the price and make it easier for the individual to buy. Certainly it should be available in all paediatric libraries and perhaps on the ward as well. Probably all paediatricians and dieticians will want to read it and many will want to own a copy for they will find it exceptionally useful in their clinical practice.

C. CHANTLER


New books on perinatal or neonatal medicine are raining down into the laps of bewildered paediatricians at the moment like over-ripe plums. They seem to say the same thing in slightly different ways and it is beginning to be difficult to tell them apart. This one has 12 contributors, but the two editors, both from Downstate Medical Center, State University of New York, have written 17 of the 25 chapters themselves, and contributed largely to two more, so that there is considerable uniformity of style. The scope is ambitious. They aim to cover all aspects of fetal and neonatal medicine, and to include basic science as well as clinical information. Thus a background of embryology, physiology, and pathophysiology is provided, as well as clinical signs, differential diagnosis, details of diagnostic tests, and treatment. A transatlantic note is provided by an entire chapter on medicolegal aspects written by a lecturer in legal medicine; and two surgeons cover most of the commonly encountered surgical problems in another chapter. Short notes on new advances which came too late for the text are given as addenda in an appendix, and reveal the overweening time it takes to get a book published these days. The text is liberally illustrated, and diagrams are generally clear and reproductions of photographs and x-rays of good quality, though one picture entitled 'skeletal anomalies following use of LSD during pregnancy' and showing an infant with mis-shapen legs and an obvious meningomyelocele, seems strangely chosen. Each chapter is generously referenced, citing predominantly American work. One is