Book reviews

Disorders of Carbohydrate Metabolism in Infancy. 2nd edition. By M. CORNBATH and R. SCHWARTZ. Volume 3 in Major Problems in Clinical Paediatrics. (Pp. xvi+501; illustrated+tables. £17.25.) Philadelphia, London, Toronto: Saunders. 1976.

The first edition of this monograph appeared a decade ago and enjoyed great popularity among paediatricians because it was authoritative yet concise. In the field, advances have been occurring rapidly and those with a special interest in this subject have been waiting impatiently for the promised second edition for a number of years. The long wait has been worthwhile. The general format of the new edition resembles that of its predecessor and the knowledge of the last decade including results presented in abstract form in 1976 have been incorporated without loss of the style which comes from two authors working in such harmony that the book reads as though it came from one pen.

To mention two authors is slightly unfair, for the assistance of A. L. Schwartz was obtained in writing the opening chapter, a brief review of mammalian carbohydrate metabolism with special reference to man during critical periods of development. This information is available in a variety of other sources but is pertinent insofar as the reader of later chapters may wish to refer back to basic concepts without picking up another book. As in the first edition I fail to appreciate the detail given to maternal metabolic adjustments in pregnancy in the second chapter, but everyone will appreciate the synopsis of human fetal metabolic and endocrine changes which are now documented largely thanks to advances in assay methodology. Similarly the many advances that have occurred from neonatal studies are comprehensively marshalled in the third of the introductory chapters that make up the first section of the book.

This edition, as did the first, scores much higher in the four succeeding sections which are devoted to problems of the newborn, hereditary metabolic disorders, hypoglycaemic syndromes in infancy, and sugar malabsorption syndromes. Here the authors have provided a notably clear account of the differential

diagnosis of the symptom complexes but have backed up descriptions of specific diagnosis with useful case reports of their own or culled from the literature. Another excellent feature is the clear description of all appropriate diagnostic tests including points of detail such as blood collection technique.

In the book there is a tendency for the trees to be given more prominence than the wood, which makes for bitty reading in some sections. It is clear that the authors have been forced, rather than having fallen, into this position by their desire to be fair to the large amount of modern literature at their disposal. The reader acknowledging this, appreciates the authority of the monograph which will ensure for it an even greater respect than that which the first edition enjoyed.

R. D. G. MILNER

Liver Diseases in Infancy and Childhood.

Edited by SAMUEL R. BERENBERG (Pp. xiv+246; illustrated+tables. Dfl.65.) The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 1976.

This is not a comprehensive textbook of paediatric hepatology but a series of papers presented at a meeting held in Paris in June 1975 to discuss the significance of recent advances in some aspects of paediatric liver diseases. Each of the 24 chapters is by contributors of the highest calibre who are active participants in clinical research in liver disorders. The reader will find authoritative reports on disorders of bilirubin metabolism in the newborn (4 chapters), some form of chronic cholestasis dating from infancy (4 chapters), and the importance of hepatitis B surface antigen in paediatric liver disease (4 chapters). The nature of liver disease in alpha-antitrypsin deficiency is covered in 3 chapters. Reye's syndrome and liver tumours are dismissed with one chapter each. The difficulties still encountered in the surgical treatment of biliary atresia are well documented in Valayer's account of his experience of 35 cases. The considerable problem to be overcome in establishing liver transplantation as a therapeutic step are highlighted in Starzl's report of his experience of 56 paediatric patients.

Although the papers were prepared to provoke discussion, and show inevitable

variability in style and, due to time-limitation, in content, this well presented book can be recommended as a useful review of these topics.

Two papers concerning the management of extrahepatic portal hypertension, one advocating continuation of nonoperative management if at all possible into adult life while the other suggests that portosystemic shunting be performed before the age of 6 years, highlight what a tragedy it is that this book has been published without any record of the discussion. Even an edited version would have considerably enhanced its value. A factor in the decision to omit this may have been the untimely death of Dr. Nathalie Masse who worked so hard to make this conference a success. This reviewer searched in vain for any acknowledgement of this.

ALEX P. MOWAT

Clinical Paediatric Surgery: Diagnosis and Management. 2nd edition. Compiled and edited by PETER G. JONES. (Pp. 586; illustrated+tables. £10.00.) Oxford: Blackwell. 1976.

The first (1971) edition was 'strongly recommended' in this column, a verdict which can readily be repeated for this new edition and with the addition of 'very'.

It comes from the staff of the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, which has established itself as one of the leading paediatric centres of the world. The same team was responsible for the recent authoritative text, *Tumours of Infancy*. There is a pleasantly down-to-earth, trenchant quality about the book's style, reflecting these agreeable characteristics in the Australian temperament. But I did find the use of italics plus often an additional heavy line in the margin, for emphasizing a statement, somewhat overdone and apt to evoke the response, 'No need to shout'. Illustrations are mainly diagrammatic, and they are effective.

Any book on paediatric surgery is likely to deal well enough with straightforward issues, intussusception, oesophageal atresia, pyloric stenosis, and the like. So I sampled instead a number of difficult conditions; difficult because either complex, contentious, confusing, or confused: recurrent abdominal pain, constipation, ureteric reflux, funnel chest,

naevi (illustrated in colour), inguinal hernia (when to operate), rectal prolapse, obstructive neonatal jaundice, imperforate anus, sternomastoid tumour, enuresis, and intersex. Result in brief—full marks!

DOUGLAS GAIRDNER

The Hospitalized Adolescent. A Guide to Managing the Ill and Injured Youth.

By ADELE D. HOFMANN, R. D. BECKER, and H. PAUL GABRIEL. (Pp. xvii+249; tables. US \$14.95.) The Free Press: New York. 1976.

Now that the rate of investment in perinatology may be slowing down the other borderland, between childhood and adult life, is due for more organized exploration, development, and profit-taking by pediatricians. 'The adolescent is the most difficult of all patients', remarks Anna Freud in a sympathetic foreword, 'and his handling presents serious embarrassment'. The difficulties and the embarrassments can be utterly disruptive in hospital, and by focusing on the hospital milieu this book lights up dark corners in all hospital practice. The authors style themselves a 'writing team' comprising medicine, psychiatry, nursing, and education. The writing is not overburdened with jargon and is easy to follow, though I tripped painfully once in a while over an occasional infelicity such as *remediation* and *unremediated*, which I take to come not from *mediate* but from *remedy*.

The base is established in the first of the book's three sections. The authors theorize on critical issues of normal illness, the impact of illness, implications of hospitalization. An important chapter illustrates interactions among ward staff, patients, and parents which may influence the patient's progress.

The second section discusses basic hospital routines and principles of management in what was to me a surprisingly interesting way. A persuasive case is made for separating patients not by sex but by age. Privacy, discipline, the role of nurses and the clergy, are dealt with honestly and thoughtfully. Adolescents need information based on reality and must be told what will happen to them. If the essential hospital team is to help them avoid irrational behaviour the staff must be 'tuned in' to specific fears such as forced dependence, rejection by peers, an alteration of life style. The final section is concerned with behavioural problems and difficult situations, handicaps, death, consent, and confidentiality—

all subjects liable to evoke not only argument but anguish or dismay.

Written 'from the patient's perspective', this book is pleasingly provocative. The approach is one of thoughtful, genuine goodwill. If it seems to me to be idealized and rather too permissive, that may well be the reaction of a geriatric paediatrician. But, with Anna Freud, I hope that there will be opportunity to put the proposed plans into operation so that they can be tried and tempered by experience. This book deserves a wide audience. Paediatricians whose own families have not yet grown up may gain from it more even than the authors intended.

JOHN APLEY

Neuroblastoma. Edited by CARL POCHEDLY. (Pp. 314; illustrated+tables. £16.50.) Arnold: London. 1976.

This book, edited by Carl Pochedly, is written largely by him with the assistance of other authors dealing with special subjects. It is devoted to a detailed review of the present knowledge regarding neuroblastoma and to a description of up-to-date management. There are separate chapters on the common presentations of neuroblastoma, the special features in infancy, and the problems of the tumour in the head and central nervous system and the skeleton. There are chapters devoted to catecholamine metabolism, histiogenesis and pathology, biology and immunology. These chapters discuss much of the basic research carried out on this malignant tumour which has proved so fascinating but frustrating. A separate chapter is devoted to the benign ganglioneuroma. The surgical, radiotherapeutic, and chemotherapeutic management are covered in three further chapters and the final chapter is concerned with prognosis.

The book as a whole achieves a very well-edited review of the present knowledge concerning the tumour. It is a book which makes easy and interesting reading and will be very useful to anyone wanting to find up-to-date information on the research in and management of neuroblastoma. It is a reflection on the failure of progress with this tumour that there is nothing new for the paediatric oncologist to be gleaned from its pages. Nevertheless, it is an excellent source of reference. This book will be a useful addition to all major libraries and to oncology departments.

PAT MORRIS JONES

Worldwide Variation in Human Growth

By P. B. EVELETH and J. M. TANNER. (Pp. 498; illustrated+tables. £20.00.) Cambridge University Press: London. 1976.

This book is the product of the International Biological Programme; it gives the findings of 340 projects in 42 countries (and many other data from other countries), concerning population differences in skeletal, dental, and pubertal development and the rate of maturation for Europeans, Africans, and Asiatics in their own continents and for their descendants elsewhere. It is described as 'by far the largest computation of growth data that has ever been made'. The book is designed to assess the potentiality for growth in poor environmental conditions, and provides an indication of the probable genetic differences between populations in body shape, size, and rate of maturation. There is a 158 page appendix with approximately 1200 references.

If the reader wants to confirm what he has always thought, that the mean height of 8-year-old girls of European ancestry is 1.5 cm greater in San Juan than in La Plata, this is the book in which to check it.

R. S. ILLINGWORTH

Rational Diagnosis and Treatment. By

HENRIK R. WULFF. (Pp. 182; illustrated+tables. £3.75.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1976.

This delightful short book has nothing specifically to do with paediatrics but is first-class reading for any doctor interested in precisely what he is doing when he talks about disease entities, makes a diagnosis, or tries to carry out or evaluate clinical research. It is unusually, clearly, and attractively written and contains many ideas which will help the ordinary practising clinician as well as the research worker to think more clearly about the way he works. The chapters on Venn diagrams and Bayesian mathematics give a clear account of concepts which are valuable but unfamiliar to many of us. (They also make it much easier for the dutiful paediatrician father to understand his children's maths homework.) There is also a very good simple exposition of the use of confidence limits. A most readable and enjoyable book.

R. J. ROBINSON