

Book reviews

A Colour Atlas of Clinical Conditions in Paedodontics. By R. Rapp and G. B. Winter. (Pp. 142; illustrated. £12.00 hardback.) Wolfe: London. 1979.

This is the first coloured diagnostic atlas of paediatric dentistry to be published. It is not meant to be comprehensive but a visual guide to many abnormalities and diseases of the hard and soft tissues encountered in the oral and facial structures of children and adolescents.

The opening chapter is divided into sections based on the anatomical features of the head and is largely concerned with developmental anomalies of the cranium and face. With the aid of excellent colour pictures and x-rays, it illustrates a series of abnormal conditions with their variations, each succinctly described in brief accompanying paragraphs giving the salient features.

The second chapter is the longest and covers abnormalities of the teeth with reference to number, size, shape, structure, and colour. Although some sections may be of greater interest to paedodontists, paediatricians will find the beautifully illustrated descriptions of anomalies of tooth structure and colour especially illuminating as a number of these are iatrogenic. The coverage of gingival and periodontal conditions in chapter 3 is good but may prove confusing if taken in isolation. Chapter 4 deals with the lips, alveolar mucosa, cheeks, and floor of mouth including congenital, infective, and traumatic conditions. Many of the illustrations amplify conditions partially described in earlier sections. Except for the section on clefts, chapters 5, 6, and 7 merely add a little to the diagnostic pictures already seen and are probably of greater interest to dentists.

It was an inspired act to have a chapter on the limbs. The illustrations and content really do fulfil the authors' intention that '... they either complete a clinical picture of, or are closely related to ...' conditions already described in the atlas.

It would be wrong to claim that this book is above criticism, especially for the paedodontist who may feel it is incomplete and wishes it contained some rather more characteristic examples of certain conditions. Nevertheless, it should prove an

excellent book for medical and dental students and clinicians, providing an easily usable reference book to assist in the recognition and diagnosis of oral and dental disease.

EILEEN C. JAFFE

British Paediatric Association Classification of Diseases (in two volumes). By BPA. (Vol. 1: Pp. 220. Vol. 2: Pp. 94, index. £4.00 for the two volumes, paperback.) BPA: London. 1979.

There must be people for whom the classification of disease represents the ultimate challenge of scientific medicine. As one who is happy to leave all classification to others, I approached these volumes with trepidation.

The aim of the Health Statistics subcommittee of the BPA in preparing the new classification of diseases was to design a supplement compatible with the ninth revision of the WHO *International Classification of Diseases*, but modified to be of use specifically in paediatric and neonatal departments. The 3-digit main ICD code is followed by a 1- or 2-digit subcode. The first 4 digits of the code in the paediatric supplement are compatible with the ICD and only the fifth digit is specific to the paediatric classification. It is pointed out in the introduction that the general use of such a unified coding system will greatly facilitate data retrieval for preparation of health statistics or research purposes.

The first volume shows the layout of the codes and is divided into 16 chapters according to type of condition, areas of the body affected, or stage of life at which a condition may occur. The second volume comprises an alphabetical index of diseases with the appropriate codes. For coding purposes the alphabetical index alone should be sufficient, although it is intended that it will be used in conjunction with the main ICD.

The new supplements are far more comprehensive than the old *Cardiff Diagnostic Classification* which they replace. However, the only test of such a classification is to determine how easily and efficiently it can be used in practice.

Unfortunately I ran into trouble on my first attempt to use it for coding disease in

the newborn because there are no codes appropriate for periventricular leucomalacia. As this is one of the most common and important forms of brain damage in preterm infants and is now diagnosed in life using computerised axial tomography it seems a pity that there is no code for it. Other codes were found moderately easily as soon as the quirks of the index were recognised. The dislike of compilers for multi-indexing means that the structure of a particular index has to be understood before it can be used. In this one for instance, rhesus iso-immunisation appears under 'incompatibility—(blood)', and hyaline membrane disease under 'syndrome—respiratory distress (idiopathic)'. This is extremely irritating to the occasional user like myself who would prefer an alphabetical list three times as long that would enable him to find a condition under whichever name he cared to look, rather than having to guess where it will have been listed. The index will however prove stimulating to clerical staff who revel in the nuances of inside-out alphabetical listing and may even learn to code periventricular leucomalacia under 348.1 ('Anoxic brain damage. Excludes: when of newborn'), until the next revision is published.

Despite these criticisms the codes do represent a worth-while advance and should of course be introduced by all paediatric departments. If users keep the BPA informed of any problems they encounter there may be hope that, in the future, an optional idiot-proof version will be made available for those of us who find indices difficult to use.

J. S. WIGGLESWORTH

Liver Disorders in Childhood. Postgraduate Paediatrics Series. By A. P. Mowat. (Pp. 407; illustrated + tables. £18.50 hardback.) Butterworth: London. 1979.

I have been able to assess the usefulness of this book as a source of clinical reference in dealing with the relatively small numbers of hepatic problems coming my way. It is predictably good, both because Alex Mowat writes from a depth and breadth of experience of paediatric liver disorders unique in this country, and because he writes well.