Book reviews

Separation and Special Care Baby Units. Clinics in Developmental Medicine No. 68. Edited by F. S. W. Brimblecombe, M. P. M. Richards, and N. R. C. Robertson. (Pp. 113; illustrated + tables. £6.00 hardback.) Spastics International/Heinemann: London. 1978.

This monograph, edited by two paediatricians and a social psychologist, reviews the evidence on the effects of early separation on children and their parents and discusses admission and discharge policies of special care baby units. Several studies of babies in such units are presented. The project described in most detail is the study of parental visiting of babies admitted to the Exeter unit. It illustrates well how social circumstances and distance influence frequency of visiting. Even in this unit, committed to encouragement of visitors, some parents never came to see their babies. A study from Queen Charlotte's Hospital demonstrates how little contact babies in incubators have with any adult. Unfortunately the number of term babies on lying-in wards observed for comparison was so small that no conclusions about differences can be drawn. A contribution from a paediatrician and nurse describes how efficient medical care can be combined with a sympathetic approach to parents, and introduces the idea of an intermediate care area which does not entail separation. Statistics presented from Exeter show that only a small proportion of handicapped 5-year-old children had passed through the special care baby unit.

While not disputing the need to increase and improve intensive care facilities, the editors criticise the over-enthusiastic admission of babies 'for observation' because of minor symptoms or because their entries into the world were not completely normal. The argument against such unnecessary separation is convincing.

It is futile to expect such a practice to reduce mortality or morbidity figures. The experiences of the Cambridge unit demonstrate how the trend towards increased admission rates can be safely reversed. For about 10% of newborns some separation will be inevitable. Much can be done to promote contact between these babies and their families. The special care all babies need is the caring of their parents.

MARGARET A. LYNCH

Shorter notices

Bibliography of Infant Foods and Nutrition 1938-1977. By J. O. Henderson, S. M. Collins, L. L. Muller, and B. S. Harrap. (Pp. 322. Australian \$16.00, paperback.) Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization: Australia. 1978.

This bibliography gives the authors, titles, references, and abstract numbers of a broad selection of scientific publications from 1938 to mid-1977, mainly from Dairy Science Abstracts (DSA), Nutrition Abstracts and Reviews (NAR), Food Science and Technology Abstracts (FSTA), and Agricola SDI Service (AGRIC) (formerly CAIN). Papers included emphasise aspects of infant foods in relation to nutrition, but those on specialised aspects of medicine are excluded.

Host Defenses in the Human Neonate. Monographs in Neonatology Series. By M. E. Miller. (Pp. 123; illustrated + tables. £8.10, hardback.) Grune and Stratton: New York. 1978.

This monograph by a respected research worker is concise, readable, and, for the paediatrician, illuminating. The author

sets out to examine the interactions of the various components of inflammatory and immune responses, instead of dealing with the various systems of immunity in isolation. He succeeds brilliantly, and provides important food for thought to those concerned in the treatment of neonatal infection.

Paediatrics. Second edition. By J. Apley. (Pp. 453; illustrated. £4.95, limp cover.) Ballière Tindall: London. 1979.

The first edition of this limp-covered textbook was favourably reviewed in *Archives*, 1974, 49, 163. The format of the second edition is the same and it remains an excellent and readable introduction to the concepts and facts of paediatrics for the undergraduate student. It has stayed reasonably small and reasonably priced.

Rehabilitation of Arm Amputees and Limb-Deficient Children. By Elizabeth Robertson. (Pp. 209; illustrated + tables. £8.50 hardback.) Ballière Tindall: London. 1978.

This excellent book embodies the unrivalled experience of the former head occupational therapist to the children's unit, Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, and is predominantly about limb-deficient children. Every occupational therapist trying to help even one such child deserves a copy. It is totally practical in approach and in it such things are discussed as parental attitudes, as well as training, prosthetics, and gadgetry. Our gratitude to Elizabeth Robertson for sharing her wisdom, and to Action Research for the Crippled Child for helping to make it available, lavishly illustrated and in hardback, at a bargain price!