

Book reviews

Pediatric Kidney Disease (in two volumes). Edited by Chester M. Edelmann. (Vol. 1: pp. 573; illustrated + tables. Vol. 2: pp. 769; illustrated + tables. £35.00 each volume, hardback; cased. Little Brown: Boston. 1978.

This is the 4th multiauthor textbook of paediatric nephrology in English to appear and it is the longest and most comprehensive with more than 100 contributors. It covers the whole of nephrology including physiology and renal development, pathogenesis of renal damage, clinical investigation, complications of renal disease and their management, congenital and hereditary kidney disease, glomerulonephritis, nephrotic syndrome, systemic illness and nephritis, tubular disorders and, finally, urinary tract infection and 80 pages of paediatric urology. 85% of the authors are from the USA and most are particularly associated with the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York, an institution which has played an important role in the development of paediatric nephrology and especially developmental physiology of the kidney. The editor himself has contributed considerably to these studies. The book reflects these strengths. Some of the chapters are magnificent; that by Dr Spitzer on renal physiology and functional development has 103 pages and over 1300 references providing almost a book on its own. Other chapters dealing with basic concepts, laboratory and animal research, and pathological mechanisms are equally good. The clinical sections seem by comparison to be weaker and less well organised. For instance the management of acute renal failure is dealt with in two separate chapters, beginning on pages 466 and 1108, and with renal failure and nephritis the number of authors dealing with different aspects of the problems does

not make it easy to obtain practical clinical advice. No mention is made of hypovolaemia as a major complication in minimal change nephrotic syndrome, or of the value of dynamic renal scintigraphy in acute renal failure, or of congenital duplex kidneys and ectopic ureterocele, in spite of 25 pages on urologic trauma in childhood; it is not clear whether all children with urinary tract infection should have a micturating cystogram. Other minor criticisms could be made and, overall, fewer authors and some reorganisation of and within chapters would improve the book but none the less it is a major achievement. The information is not given in other textbooks on nephrology or paediatrics and the book reflects the emergence of paediatric nephrology as a specialised area of clinical and experimental work. It is well produced, reasonably (by current standards) priced, and while essentially a reference book, it is one which will be eagerly sought by doctors caring for children with kidney disease.

CYRIL CHANTLER

Surgical Management of Juvenile Chronic Polyarthrititis. Edited by G. P. Arden and B. M. Ansell. (Pp. 281; illustrated + tables. £15.60 hardback.) Academic Press: London. 1978.

This 275-page monograph covers a unique experience of 30 years' treatment of juvenile chronic polyarthrititis in the rheumatic unit at Taplow. With a quoted incidence of 24 per 100 000 of the population, few surgeons or physicians outside a special unit can have wide experience of the management of this condition. This book, under its 2 editors and 8 contributors, provides that information and

experience, and deals not only with surgery, but also with radiology, anaesthesia, pathology, rehabilitation, and general medical problems. It emphasises the necessity for teamwork and the value of joint clinics where discussions can take place about the treatment of diseases such as this which have such widespread effects.

Surgery and anaesthesia are not without their hazards in this crippling disease, but advances in joint replacement are revolutionising what can be offered to these patients. The chapter on anaesthetic problems and the use of ketamine in patients in whom intubation is dangerous, if not impossible, is most interesting. Replacement of the hip joint is now common and successful operation. However, the particular problems presented by these children and the special methods used to overcome them have been learned by hard experience which is invaluable to other surgeons. Knee joint replacement remains a problem. Several types are being assessed, but none has become established in the way that the hip joint has done. Hands and feet have not been forgotten, particularly the importance of simple conservative methods, such as splints and supports.

Rehabilitation is rightly emphasised. The devastating effect in terms of joint stiffness which can result from taking a simple biopsy of the knee in the young child, is pointed out several times. The use of a prone lying couch, regular exercises, swimming, rest, and sometimes work splints, stress the importance of continuous treatment in daily life as well as in hospital. I would certainly recommend this short, readable book for anyone interested in the formidable problems presented by these children.

J. A. FIXSEN