the circulation cannot be *fetal* without the placenta, and in the normal transitional circulation blood is shunted left-to-right through a partially closed ductus. Though clumsy 'persistent fetal pulmonary hypertension' would be a more appropriate title. The clinical description of the syndrome leaves out important signs which are almost pathognomonic—such as the weak femoral and left brachial pulses and, sometimes, the presence of an unusual differential cyanosis with relative pinkness confined to the face, right arm, and the right side of the chest. In the footnote on p. 36 presumably PO_2 is an error for PCO_2 . In the chapter on ventricular septal defect there are two different figures given for spontaneous closure, over 70% (p. 138) and 60% (p. 140).

Apart from such minor criticisms it is a handsomely produced book with a wealth of up-to-date information on paediatric cardiology. Paediatric cardiologists may find this book too concise for their purposes, but the general paediatrician will find it worthwhile reading, and it should greatly assist those preparing for higher qualifications.

R J K BROWN

The Orthopaedic Management of Spina Bifida Cystica, second edition. By Malcolm Menelaus. (Pp. 217; illustrated + tables. £23.00 hardback.) Current Problems in Orthopaedics. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh 1980.

The first edition of this book was produced in 1971 and since then a lot has happened in the field of spina bifida. Antenatal diagnosis and neonatal selection have resulted in a striking change in the type of patient presenting to the orthopaedic surgeon, and it has become obvious that many techniques of treatment have failed to produce the expected results. The second edition is timely and reflects these changes, and the scope of the book has been widened by including sections on embryology, genetics, antenatal diagnosis, the management of pressure sores, and anaesthetics. Consideration is also given to the way in which problems affecting other systems influence orthopaedic management. In these sections the author has been assisted by several of his colleagues at the Royal Children's Hospital and the University of Melbourne.

Most of the book is devoted to the specific problems of orthopaedic management. A chapter on the causes of deformity and assessment is followed by what might be considered the core of the book—a section on the principles of management—which reflects the author's philosophy and aims, and his wise, humane approach to his handicapped patients. Each area of orthopaedics is covered in detail, with sections on the spine, hips, knees, and feet; special attention is given to the problems posed by abnormalities of skin sensibility and to fractures, and there are valuable chapters on physiotherapy and orthotics.

The author draws continually on his own considerable experience, supplemented by a well-chosen survey of the literature, and an extensive bibliography at the end arranged in alphabetical order of authors' names.

When reviewing a book it is difficult to avoid a favourable bias if the views expressed coincide almost completely with one's own, but this one contains very little that has not been based on a careful and critical examination of each problem. It is refreshing to find an authority who admits to having 'changed his mind' on many topics. The section on the hip makes this point forcefully, and overall perhaps the greatest impression this edition makes (compared with its predecessor) is a change towards more simple procedures, more carefully defined aims, and a frank recognition of the difficulties of this type of surgery.

The illustrations are well chosen and of good quality, and the text is supplemented by appendices on anaesthetics, an interesting, although irrelevant, one giving notes for parents of spina bifida children, and a list of spina bifida associations.

For anyone undertaking the orthopaedic management of spina bifida children there is a wealth of detail here. The book undoubtedly reflects current orthopaedic thinking in the field and could well be regarded as compulsory reading.

T DUCKWORTH