chapters by leading experts in their particular field. These include F B Gibberd on petit mal, L S Bass on benign paroxysmal vertigo, F S Gubbay on the clumsy child, and Sheila Wallace on pyrexial convulsions. John Stephenson contributes a fascinating chapter on cerebellar disorders, with some rather personal views and much condensed useful information. Perhaps another half dozen of the 39 chapters are of almost the same interest and quality, but much of the rest is a disappointment. Barely a quarter of the authors are practising paediatric neurologists, and some of the chapters seem to be based more on knowledge of the literature or on experience with adults than on wide practical experience of children with neurological disorders. Some major subjects like cerebral palsy and epilepsy (other than the specific aspects already mentioned) are dealt with less fully and adequately than one would expect in a textbook of paediatric neurology, which should provide appreciably more than a standard textbook of paediatrics. The work of the developmental assessment centre is well described, and there is a somewhat theoretical chapter on developmental neurology, but there is no full and satisfactory account of developmental assessment and what it contributes to paediatric neurological diagnosis. The chapters on degenerative CNS disorders are somewhat weak and would not provide a great deal of practical help in the recognition of the child who has a progressive disorder and then the diagnosis of which it is. In its first edition, therefore, the book has some of the strengths but many of the weaknesses of multiple authorship. It does not provide a comprehensive and cohesive account of paediatric neurology to stand comparison with the best of its American counterparts.

ROGER ROBINSON


This is a book about health education, an ordered presentation of attitudes and procedures which have developed in the Children's Hospital, Columbus, Ohio, and the community it serves. Part 1 is concerned with concept and method; part 2 with the practical mechanics of 70 procedures and situations from taking the temperature (still on the Fahrenheit scale) to the management of diabetes and cystic fibrosis. The precision of these is impressive, but the reasons for including G6–PD deficiency and excluding disturbed behaviour and psychiatric disorders is not explained.

Five of the 7 authors are nurses, and the programme on which the book is based was fashioned in the hospital's department of nursing. It is designed for 'today's health professionals and students' and for 'patients, parents, and staff'.

Such a book may be useful in the present context of primary care, paediatric nursing, and parent expectations in the USA; I have serious reservations about its value in Britain. It is 'hospital centred' when we are seeking to bring the hospital into a supporting role to primary care in the community.

It is grounded in traditional physical disease when need is moving towards handicap, disturbed behaviour, and the effect on the child of family dysfunction and breakdown.

Precision is certainly essential for the effective management of illness; the detail of the instructions in this book suggest that patient and family education is not simply a desirable factor in the parent-professional partnership on which rational health care depends, but a necessary means of containing the rising costs of medical care in the USA.

We shall always need to improve our communication with children and parents, but in the UK this is primarily personal not verbal.

This book would persuade us that in addition to the responsibility for personal explanation inherent in all medical and nursing practice we should develop a formal educational system, with all its inflationary demands for time and money, and yet another professional—the parent-educator. And all for a process 'the effectiveness of which is unknown'.

The authors claim that 'today's nurses are providing more health care education than any other group'; it was therefore surprising that the role of the nurse as family interpreter was not central to their educational approach. If this had been the case the book could have been addressed to a precise audience, and by separating the nurse teaching material from direct parent guidance the present ambivalence could have been avoided.

However, the authors would ask to be judged by their peers both in nursing and health education. Until that is done I hope British paediatric nurses will come out from hospitals into homes, that they will be more ready to accept parents as professional partners in the care of children, and above all that they will never see pamphlets, however well designed, as a substitute for personal advice.

DONALD COURT


Those concerned with child health in developing countries and many others will already be familiar with Maurice King's book Primary Child Care. That volume however was only the first of four parts of his microplan to help in the training in child health of medical assistants and many others. The second part consisted of 10 sets of 24 slides to be used in conjunction with the first book. These sets are available from TALC Institute of Child Health, 30 Guilford Street, London WC1 1EH, in various forms, the least costly being only £15 (or £9 for those ordering for use in developing countries).

Like other materials from TALC in this form, the slides cost less than the price of a 35 mm film at normal retail price. They are sent out post-free with a full script.

The third part is the book reviewed here, which provides managers—such as district medical officers, senior nurses, and midwives—with a wide variety of instruments for measuring some variables that determine the quality of primary child care.

While primarily aimed at developing countries the concepts developed in this book are likely to be of wider interest. Rather more than half of the book is devoted to three sets of multiple choice questions. For each of the 26 chapters in the workers manual there is a pretest, also a set of questions for the students to practise on and teach themselves, and lastly a set for a post-test when the study of the chapter has been completed.