Book reviews

Pediatric Critical Care Nursing. Edited by K W Vestal. (Pp. 450; illustrated + tables. £12.80 hardback.) Wiley: New York. 1981.

The aim of this book is to aid both teachers and students. It attempts to combine a wider range of topics than is normally found in one volume, but concentrates on the care of the child within an intensive care unit. The early chapters stress the importance of the nurse becoming familiar with the normal stages of development in order to assess her patients. It is encouraging to find that the authors consider family involvement in such units to be essential.

Stress is considered in relation to its effect on everyone, and factors which implicate the nursing staff are described particularly those created by physicians and surgeons; the authors state that these are probably the greatest which have to be endured.

Ensuing chapters define on a systemic basis the conditions which may affect children and describe in considerable detail such topics as the maintenance of fluid and electrolyte balance. It is unfortunate that the nursing process receives very little recognition because a problem-solving approach to the care of the critically ill child would have greatly enhanced the value of this book.

This is an American publication and abbreviations are used extensively and these are confusing at times. Drug names and methods of treatment frequently differ from those used here.

This book should provide useful reading for paediatric nurses, and the concepts of child care described in the early chapters may be useful for medical or nursing staff who care for children in adult intensive care units.

PAMELA M JEFFERIES

The Undescended Testis. By E W Fonkalsrud and W Mengel. (Pp. 279; illustrated + tables. £28.50 hardback.) YB Medical Publishers: Chicago. 1981.

Various forms of management are recommended for undescended testes; some authorities argue against disturbing

the delicate structures of the infant cord, others advocate medical treatment in an attempt to avoid or postpone the surgeon's knife, but few have followed up the long-term results of treatment. This book presents scientific and clinical fact which puts into perspective much of the conflicting practice.

The chapters on the relevant embryology and endocrinology are well presented. Clinical data are reviewed and the preliminary results with pernasal LH-RH may challenge surgeons to investigate this pain-free treatment further. By contrast, the painful injections of HCG are reviewed with reservations.

It is disappointing that Peter Jones's muscle splitting incision (*British Journal of Surgery* 1979; 66: pages 14-8) for the high undescended testis is not mentioned in the chapters on operative techniques. In the description of a routine orchidopexy the authors suggest division of the inferior epigastric vessels; most British surgeons preserve these vessels, preferring to tunnel beneath them if extra length is required. The authors recommend discharge from hospital on the second or third postoperative day, but do not mention that the younger patient is ideally managed in a day-care ward.

These are minor criticisms of an excellent book which should be read by all surgeons and physicians presuming to treat boys with undescended testes. It presents data from North America, Europe, and Africa and indicates where clinical and laboratory research should be looking in the future to answer the increasing number of questions surrounding this common anomaly.

D P DRAKE

The Year Book of Pediatrics. Edited by F A Oski and J A Stockman III. (Pp. 480; illustrated + tables. £24.75 hardback.) YB Medical Publishers: Chicago. 1981.

Practical Pediatrics. Volume 1. Selected abstracts. First annual edition. Edited by R H Rapkin. (Pp. 227; £12.00 hardback.) Wright/PSG: Boston, Mass. 1981.

These volumes have similar aims—to record and summarise important papers

published during the last year. Each reminds the paediatrician about papers he has read, points out the ones he missed, and provides a reference source for recent papers on a particular disorder.

The Year Book of Paediatrics (YBP) needs no introduction or recommendation; it has proved its worth over the years, and I greatly value my own set to which I generally turn first when confronted by an unfamiliar problem.

Practical Pediatrics (PP) contains about half the number of text pages of YBP but refers to almost twice as many papers so that it generally deals with them much more briefly. Thus a paper on the neonatal blood count is summarised in 5 lines in PP with a comment that 'there are tables and graphs galore' but YBP actually reproduces 7 of the tables and graphs. PP may direct one to the appropriate paper to find information whereas YBP will often contain it.

The index to such volumes is of great importance; that of YBP is rather fuller, and includes an author index which at times is useful. An unwelcome minor change in the YBP index is that it now gives reference numbers instead of page numbers.

PP is half the price of YBP but YBP is larger and more attractive, having tables and diagrams. The papers summarised in the two volumes only partly overlap so libraries will find it valuable to have both. YBP looks secure in my own affections.

ROGER ROBINSON

Shorter notice

Amniotic Fluid and its Clinical Significance. Reproductive Medicine Series. Volume 2. Edited by Merton Sandler. (Pp. 307; illustrated + tables. Sfr. 98.00 hardback.) Dekker: New York. 1981.

A collection of papers on all aspects of amniotic fluid including biochemistry, cytology, pharmacology, and the increasing place of amniocentesis in prenatal diagnosis. Of interest to obstetricians, paediatricians, and fetal and neonatal psychologists.