tendency to lack of detail, there is some repetition, and very little comparison of the efficacy of different treatments and evaluation of outcome after treatment; to some extent this reflects the state of current knowledge in child psychiatry.

One important omission is the absence of discussion of paediatric liaison psychiatry. Despite this I highly recommend this book both for child psychiatrists and paediatricians.

JOHN PEARCE


If general paediatricians could interpret ECGs more confidently their ability to make the correct diagnosis in congenital heart disease would be greatly improved, particularly in neonates and young infants. Many have tried to master the art but have found the available literature turgid, obscure, or tedious and have given up the attempt. This remarkable little book succeeds in making paediatric electrocardiography almost entertaining and that is no mean achievement.

All necessary subjects are covered and there are chapters on making measurements, normal values, chamber hypertrophy and localisation, conduction disturbances, and arrhythmias. As would be expected each chapter is liberally illustrated with specimen electrocardiograms, but the numerous excellent diagrams which provide pithy summaries of rather complicated problems are more important. At the end of each chapter there is a do-it-yourself quiz to check on progress, and the main section of the book ends with 18 specimen electrocardiograms which the reader is invited to analyse for himself before reading their interpretation.

Thus the book is unashamedly didactic. Its purpose is not to display the authors’ intimate knowledge of the minutiae of the subject, but to teach anyone with a minimal background experience of the subject to read ECGs, and to read them with sufficient confidence that they may be of practical diagnostic use. This approach inevitably means that there are quite a few over-simplifications and an occasional point with which I would quibble, but these are minor blemishes in an otherwise splendid volume.

Almost the best section in the whole book is the appendix, which deals with common technical errors in electrocardiograms. In my experience it is precisely reversal of limb leads, over-exuberant use of electrode jelly, and misplacement of precordial leads that cause paediatricians the most problems but these subjects are generally ignored in textbooks because they are felt to be too trivial.

If you already know a fair amount about the subject don’t buy this book, but if you have ever thought ‘if only I could make sense of these squiggles’, and would like to learn how to in a fairly painless way, hurry to the bookshop before you are too late!

FERGUS J MACARTNEY

Shorter notice


Although echocardiography is a specialised technical area within the field of paediatric cardiology many paediatricians would benefit from an understanding of its uses and limitations. This book adequately fills the need for a clear, logical text on the subject. Beginning with basic concepts and physics both single crystal and two-dimensional techniques are described with good illustrations. One important feature is that the echocardiogram as a diagnostic aid is not over-emphasised and attention is drawn to pitfalls in interpretation and technique.