

Book reviews

Pediatric Hypertension. By J R Ingelfinger. Major Problems in Clinical Pediatrics Series. Vol. 24. Pp. 297: £32.50 hardback. Philadelphia: Saunders, 1982.

What a lovely book this is. Though of modest size it provides a comprehensive account of all aspects of hypertension ranging from the physiology, epidemiology, and aetiology to investigation and management at different ages. The 20 chapters are written with admirable clarity and economy, yet manage to consider everything from the early history and research to present-day fads and fashions; they combine a balanced view of the theoretical and the practical.

The material is attractively presented with helpful subheadings and many illustrations. Indeed it is a treasury of nostalgic illustrations, for many of them have been reproduced from one's favourite papers and books on hypertension; it is full of memorable corners of some of the great papers of the past (the only one missing is the British Rail advertisement showing the difference in blood pressure between travelling from Leeds to London by train as opposed to motorway!) I don't think I have ever seen a book which contains so many pictures purloined, with proper permission, from other periodicals; yet what a treasury of hypertension it turns out to be. It all goes to show that you can get away with anything provided that you do it with style and I have a feeling that Julie Ingelfinger is the kind of lady who could walk into a Bond Street jewellers and walk out with all the jewels and the police would merely stand back and applaud.

All aspects of the literature are well reviewed and there are invaluable lists of references at the end of each chapter; I just wonder if it would have been even more useful if they had been assembled as a single reference list at the back of the monograph.

The only weaknesses at present are the rather lightweight clinical descriptions. There is the most full description of modern high technology investigation of hypertension but scanty description of the clinical clues that lead one to the initial identification. The list of symptoms and signs of hypertensive encephalopathy could have come from any small general

textbook and could have been written by someone who had never encountered it; they need a fuller account with more colour to help the clinician. A picture of a child with facial palsy would have provided a useful teaching point as well as the opportunity for just one picture of a child to compete with the many of kidneys and histograms. Some of the more important associations receive scant attention: neurofibromatosis receives only one paragraph in the whole book. These are small criticisms in a book of such promise and pleasure. I hope that, as with one or two other distinguished books in this particular series, it will run to subsequent editions in which the author may rectify some of the omissions without adding greatly to the length.

The book will be helpful to all paediatricians including those who know little about hypertension and those who know a lot. I recommend it wholeheartedly.

ROY MEADOW

Behavioural Problems in Childhood. A Primary Care Approach. Edited by S Gabel. Pp. 447: \$39.50 hardback. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1981.

This is one of an increasing number of textbooks, mainly American, which has moved away from the traditional psychoanalytic views of childhood behavioural and emotional problems to focus in a more immediate and practical way on a developmental and symptom-orientated method of treatment. The emphasis is on the 'here and now' rather than on the child's distant past and, although intended for the general paediatrician, the book has a lot to offer child psychiatrists.

The editor has managed to obtain a fairly uniform approach from the 24 contributors but, inevitably, some rather idiosyncratic styles and treatment methods are apparent. For example, the chapters on abdominal pain and sleep disorder are difficult to follow. Unfortunately the chapters on aggression and antisocial behaviour are very short despite the frequency with which these symptoms occur. The sections at the end of each chapter, which focus on treatment

techniques, are also rather brief and at times lack detail. This is compensated for by the developmental and behavioral approach of the book which often directly indicates treatment approaches. The references are carefully selected and useful.

As with most books from America, there are some details which are difficult to transfer across the Atlantic but this does not detract from the very strong recommendation that can be given to the book as a whole; it is the best one of its type that I have come across and deserves a place in every paediatric and child psychiatric library.

J B PEARCE

Shorter notices

Basic Developmental Screening: 0-4 years. Third edition. By R S Illingworth. Pp. 34: £2.80 paperback. Oxford: Blackwell, 1982.

This new version of Professor Illingworth's well-known pocket-sized book has an extended age range, but the developmental details of the latter two years are limited in scope and uninspired. Nevertheless, it is an easily learnt and valuable guide to childhood development for medical students, health visitors, and others concerned in this vital field.

Metabolic Adaptation to Extrauterine Life. The Antenatal Role of Carbohydrates and Energy Metabolism. Edited by R de Meyer. Volume 1 in Developments in Perinatal Medicine Series. Pp. 371: Dfl.110.00: US \$58.00 hardback. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981.

This report of a European symposium dealing exclusively with carbohydrate and energy metabolism in the fetus and newborn is much more readable than a first glance would suggest. It is very well referenced, and contains a lot of information which is highly relevant to clinical thinking on a neonatal unit. Anyone who has more than a passing interest in the metabolism of the newborn would do well to obtain a copy.