

Book reviews

The Damocles Syndrome. Psychosocial Consequences of Surviving Childhood Cancer. By G P Koocher and J E O'Malley. (Pp. 219; tables. £12.95 hardback.) McGraw Hill: New York. 1981.

This is about the psychosocial effects in the long-term survivors of childhood cancer and their families. It is an important book which anyone working on the psychosocial aspects of life-threatening disorders, either in research or service, needs to have. Those working predominantly on physical aspects of care should have access to it; they need read no further.

The two chief authors are psychologist and psychiatrist members of a team of workers at the Sydney Farber Cancer Institute and the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston. Several papers on the psychological aspects of childhood cancer have emanated from the team during the last few years and now in this book they detail and summarise the issues as well as their own 5-year exploration of the quality of life and adaptation of the survivors of childhood malignancy.

The book is mainly a report of the follow-up study of 117 young people no longer on treatment for cancer. Multiple measures were used and a comprehensive view obtained. The form of presentation is a successful mixture of tabulated survey findings, descriptive accounts of the responses of the ex-patients, parents, and siblings, and commentary by the authors and their colleagues. Altogether this is an absorbing and optimistic account.

As in all studies of this type there are problems—for example with the age-range of the patients at diagnosis (0–18 years), time since end of treatment (mean 12.2 years), and age when seen for the study (5.6–37 years). However, the authors point out these difficulties and they also deal honestly with the problems they had in establishing a control or comparison group.

This is not a scientific milestone with an implication of a semi-permanent marking of the path of progress; it could be described as a well-executed map that should serve the clinical traveller and his

research companion well—open to revision and correction by them in the light of experience.

ROY HOWARTH

Language Assessment for Remediation. By D J Müller, S M Munro, and C Code. (Pp. 169; illustrated + tables. £11.95 hardback, £6.50 paperback.) Croom Helm: London. 1981.

This has been written by lecturers at a school of speech therapy primarily as a core textbook for students of this discipline. Essentially the book summarises and criticises the test procedures available for the assessment of the many different aspects of language. The summaries are clear, concise, and factually sound; the sequence and grouping for presentation are logical. Each test description is followed by a discussion of its value in diagnosis.

The main aim of the book, as suggested by the title and clearly stated in the first chapter, is to stress the importance of assessment in providing a basis for therapeutic intervention. Unfortunately the authors then state that the early test descriptions do not provide a useful basis for remediation; this is disappointing for the reader interested in such application. Happily this is remedied in later sections dealing with the Reynell Developmental Language Scales in conjunction with the Wolfson assessment procedure and the LARSP procedure, etc.

Neither the title nor the preface focuses the reader's attention on the scope of the book relative to the age of the patient. Nevertheless, the single chapter on techniques applicable to adults comes as a surprise in the second half. The density of facts in this chapter is even greater than in its predecessors, which necessitates re-reading an uncomfortably large number of paragraphs in transit.

The book summarises and clearly puts forward new ideas and evidence concerning childhood bilingualism. The last two chapters deal with the application of behavioural techniques and discuss such issues as the involvement of parents and friends in therapy, and the adaptation of

therapy to the patient's own environment. The argument is very theoretical and would have been improved by a few examples from practice.

The result is a concise, if somewhat dry, textbook which succeeds in its aim of presenting facts concerning current assessment techniques and their application or lack of it, to therapy. Referencing is comprehensive and accurate; therefore the book will be of value to teachers and researchers in related fields.

PATRICIA M SONNEN

Neonatal Neurology. Edited by M Coleman. (Pp. 417 including index; illustrated + tables. £43.50 hardback.) University Park Press: Baltimore. 1981.

This is one of three recent books on this subject, each of which reflects the author's bias. In this one emphasis is placed on diagnosis through dysmorphic features; these, including a potpourri of 'other syndromes' and a rather full discussion of chromosomal disorders, occupy 82 pages. More common disorders, such as perinatal infections (10 pages), spina bifida (6 pages), hydrocephalus (6 pages), hypoxic/ischaemic injuries (2 pages), and intracranial haemorrhage (2 pages) are treated more superficially. Therefore one does not get a feel for the relevant questions concerning management decisions or prevention of these common conditions. The chapter on neuroradiology (74 pages) covers most aspects.

The layout is strange; the technique of the neurological examination (which focuses particularly on looking at and measuring the child) is separated from the relevance of its interpretation, and further on there are other chapters on separate neurological topics. Inevitably there is repetition—for example, the chapter on problems of tone and weakness overlaps that on motor unit disorders.

This book presents a one-sided view of neonatal neurology and neither the text nor the price compares favourably with Volpe's *Neurology of the Newborn*, or Fenichel's *Neonatal Neurology*.

R O ROBINSON