

Book reviews

A Manual of Neonatal Intensive Care. By N R C Robertson. (Pp. 278 incl. index; illustrated+tables. £9.95 paperback.) Arnold: London 1981.

Pressures are being put on maternity hospitals to provide high standards of care for very ill and often very preterm babies. These pressures will not go away; in fact efforts to centralise neonatal intensive care have the paradoxical effect of making greater demands on paediatric and nursing staff at district maternity hospitals who feel duty bound to give babies a chance and to provide at least short-term intensive care until help is forthcoming from the regional centre.

This manual of neonatal intensive care will enable the resident paediatrician to endure his punishment on the neonatal unit with much greater confidence. Neonatal medicine, far from being highly specialised, is the last bastion of the general physician. A knowledge of physiology of the different organ systems during adaptation to extrauterine life is very necessary and enough is included in this book to help the resident understand the common neonatal disorders. The author has managed to cram virtually all the topics relevant to neonatal intensive care into 250 small pages and keep the text readable.

The chapters on resuscitation and respiratory disorders are particularly helpful, with a lucid account of the use of assisted ventilation. One of my obsessional-compulsive behaviour traits is that I cannot pass flow diagrams without tracing every stream of arrows from their source to destination; some of the author's compositions were a problem. I narrowly escaped becoming trapped in the 2-page spread of guided missiles which showed what to do when an infant deteriorates on a ventilator. Dr Pickering's chapter on congenital heart disease is instructive; did you know that each of the major types of cyanotic congenital heart disease begins with the letter 'T'?

It is clear that the author has spent much time by the incubator resolving clinical problems, and this excellent book contains the nuances of neonatal care that are rarely found elsewhere; for me that is one of its greatest strengths. It will strongly appeal to resident paediatricians.

My only complaint is that the cover of the book is pink! I suppose this was necessary for balance because throughout the text babies are referred to as 'he'. May I urge the publishers to go the whole hog and produce the next edition in an appropriate shade of blue?

MALCOM CHISWICK

Paediatric Practice in Developing Countries. By G J Ebrahim. Macmillan Tropical Community Health Manuals. General Editor J Grant. (Pp. 321 including index; illustrated+tables. £12.00 paperback.) Macmillan: London. 1981.

This book is intended primarily for district medical officers in developing countries responsible for organising and administering district mother and child health services. It provides accounts of the background to paediatric disease in developing countries followed by sections on specific infections and diseases of systems. These last chapters contain accounts of the epidemiology and the pathogenesis of disease, and variable amounts of instruction on the diagnosis and treatment of individual conditions.

The doctor in a developing country is confronted by the dilemma of how to divide time between the organisation of preventive medical services and the treatment of sick patients. There is a similar dilemma here in that the author seems undecided whether to write on the management of acute paediatric disease or on the organisation of paediatric health care. The management of specific conditions is dealt with somewhat patchily. There is no account of tetanus; bronchiolitis gets all-embracing treatment; tuberculous meningitis is dealt with in two brief paragraphs. Some treatment regimens are unusual and confusing (especially for digoxin on pages 236 and 238). The parts relative to paediatric services seem to lack practical detail. Nutritional rehabilitation services and under fives clinics occupy only half a page each although we are told that 'the importance of the under fives' clinic... has not been sufficiently appreciated'. The final section which covers 'Provision of care' is so crucial that it demands more than the final 7 pages.

This book is one of a series of manuals available at a reduced price in developing countries; this is good. Nevertheless, despite the price and clear, attractive layout, those wondering whether to buy it would be wise to see it first so as to decide whether it really would be of value in their paediatric practice.

ELIZABETH POSKITT

Recent Advances in Paediatrics 6. Edited by D Hull. (Pp. 264 incl. index; illustrated + tables. £17.00 hardback.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1981.

The difficulties encountered in reviewing this book in no way reflect on its qualities. Since paediatrics is an age-related rather than a system-related specialty the reader will most appreciate those chapters which deal with his own particular interests within the specialty. However, the appearance of a new number of *Recent advances in paediatrics* is an event for all paediatricians in the UK and for many abroad. This maintains and, in many ways, improves on the standards of earlier numbers in scope and in the quality of the contributions.

In twelve chapters the volume contains authoritative reviews of aspects of paediatrics as diverse as interpretation of perinatal mortality statistics, reviews of clinical practice in its scientific basis in neonatal paediatrics, paediatric cardiology, chronic diarrhoeal disease, liver disease, and malignant diseases in childhood. Other contributions include thoughtful reviews of diabetes of childhood, the role of immunology in paediatrics, and chronic central nervous system disease in childhood. It is also valuable to the paediatrician of the 1980s to have a discursive chapter on the place of health education. It is perhaps one of the outstanding features of this volume that it provides such a critical review of many of the most controversial aspects currently in paediatric practice. The first chapter on problems and interpretation of perinatal mortality statistics treats the subject with a delicate and informed scepticism and should be required reading for individuals or groups discussing priorities for health care and who draw facile conclusions on

crude data. I particularly appreciated the chapter by N R C Robertson on developments in neonatal paediatric practice which seemed to review an astonishing amount of information within the scope of 38 pages. No chapter falls below the standard which earlier volumes have led us to expect.

A special mention should be given to the chapters on chronic diarrhoeal disease in older children by Anne Ferguson, current developments of chronic liver disease by Alex P Mowat, and advances in paediatric cardiology by Olive Scott, for their educational value to the general paediatrician.

The very best review articles tend to be those which least resemble a catalogue of disorders and thereby are most selective of those aspects of the subject in which the most important advances have been made, or seem likely to be made. Perhaps the most catalogue-like chapter is that on chronic central nervous system disease in childhood.

This book is well produced and in most instances the references are remarkably up to date; the uniform style of editing makes the volume easy to read without applying constraints to the writers. In his preface David Hull states that with each new edition the editor has to ask the question 'is there still a need for this type of view'. The answer is undoubtedly yes, given such a felicitous choice of topics and authors and such a high standard of editing. All paediatricians would benefit from reading this book and none would be disappointed.

J SYME

Sexually Abused Children and their Families. Edited by P P Mrazek and C H Kempe. (Pp. 271 incl. index; illustrated + tables. £12.50 (\$25.00) hardback.) Pergamon: Oxford. 1981.

At an absolute minimum 3 per thousand children in the UK have been sexually abused at some time in their childhood; this was the conclusion drawn by Mrazek, Lynch, and Bentovim from a survey they conducted by questionnaire and which they report in chapter 4 of this book.

Despite this, well over two-thirds of the 143 British paediatricians replying to the questionnaire had never seen a case; the authors suggest that there is a denial and avoidance of child sexual abuse similar to the attitudes of professionals towards physical abuse 20 years ago.

It seems that those of us who have a responsibility for child care have a lot to learn about the sexual abuse of children and this book is a good place to begin. There are contributions on various aspects of the problem by 18 authors, most of them colleagues of the editors in Denver, Colorado, and the subject matter, which is based mainly on American experience and practice, is arranged in five parts: recognition, the law, psychodynamics, treatment, and prognosis. The sections on the British survey and on the medical management are perhaps the most helpful for British paediatricians. Because most of the contributors are American psychiatrists and social workers the style and language will be difficult for British medical readers to understand. However, with a little effort it should be possible to grasp the meaning of such phrases as 'family disequalizer' and 'spouse subsystem'.

Any book on child abuse with Henry Kempe's name on the cover should be worth reading and this one is no exception.

A D M JACKSON

The Sick Newborn Baby. By C J H Kelnar and D Harvey. (Pp. 351 including index; illustrated + tables. £8.50 paperback.) Ballière Tindall: London. 1981.

This was written by a senior registrar and a senior lecturer in paediatrics and they have tried to provide more than just an account of the care of normal babies without creating a textbook of neonatal intensive care. It was meant for junior medical staff as well as nurses and midwives taking advanced diplomas, and in general it fulfils its intentions.

The opening chapters discuss the challenge of perinatal care and prenatal influences on the baby, and are followed by chapters on resuscitation and care of

normal babies. There is a series of chapters on particular problem areas—such as low birthweight babies, respiratory difficulties, nutrition, congenital malformations, birth trauma, jaundice, bleeding, neurological problems, and infection. Short chapters on the large-for-dates baby, the problems of coping with stillbirth, neonatal death, deformity, and handicap, and on perinatal care in developing countries complete the main text. Chapters are followed by suggestions for further reading and the appendix includes some normal values, standard drug doses, a list of addresses of well-known paediatric societies and associations, and two methods for assessing gestational age.

The book will help a junior paediatrician in a district general hospital to establish a baby on a ventilator and sustain it at least until the flying squad team arrives, but perhaps a too detailed account of intravenous feeding and the insertion of a central venous line is given. On the other hand, tolazoline, a potentially hazardous drug, is mentioned in one sentence which gives precise dosage but does not mention side effects.

This fits into a doctor's white coat pocket and contains many diagrams, graphs, tables, and black and white photographs, most of which show what they are supposed to show.

D G MMS

Shorter notice

MCQ's in Paediatrics. By W S Uttley. (Pp. 168; £3.95 paperback.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1982.

The booklet contains about 350 multiple choice questions of the popular 'determinant response' format in which a common stem is followed by 5 independent true/false items. The questions are grouped into 19 subject sections each of which corresponds to a section of Forfar and Arnel's *Textbook of paediatrics*. The answers are printed on the reverse side of the page on which the questions are posed, which makes for easy use as well as easy cheating.