

or fills in the corners rather inefficiently. Only Dr Pearn's chapter on genetics is allowed to stand without a 'doppel-ganger' of this type. Little real discussion emerges from this arrangement. There is too much jargon in the chapters on parents' groups for them to win converts to this debatable approach to counselling. There is so much that is valuable in this book that it seems a shame to have weakened it by not arranging for the authors to meet to coordinate their approach. Overall, however, it provides by far the most comprehensive and up to date review of these neglected disorders, and for this reason it is certainly to be recommended.

D GARDNER MEDWIN

**Drug Prescribing in Pregnancy.** Current Reviews in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. By B Krauer, F Krauer, and F Hytten. Pp 188: £9.95 paperback. Churchill, Livingstone, 1984.

The forward to this book was written by Tom Lind who positively glows saying that it is an invaluable book for anyone prescribing for women during pregnancy. This is perhaps to be expected for he has openly confessed that Frank Hytten, one of the authors, is his 'guru', but reviewed through paediatric or even neonatal eyes, this book is not exactly what the doctor ordered. Perhaps the title is slightly misleading. It is not the sort of book with an exhaustive reference that one can consult when an abnormal baby is born to a mother taking unusual drugs to see if similar problems have been reported previously. Nor is there any comment about drugs and breast feeding. This is not a criticism but merely an observation on the contents. The book is generally much more scientific and theoretical and is, therefore, of less immediate value to the average neonatologist.

The first half is very physiological and to those who have read that excellent book *Clinical Physiology in Obstetrics*<sup>1</sup> there will be a strong ring of familiarity of style and

even contents. The meat of the matter is the effect of pregnancy on drug handling. Most drugs given in pregnancy are primarily for the benefit of the mother, so much space is given to the altered pharmacokinetics of the drug caused by the changes in maternal tissues in the various stages of pregnancy. For the average perinatologist, the pharmacokinetics vary from difficult to impossible but I admit to being wiser now about the factors affecting placental transfer.

The second half of the book deals with individual drugs in more detail. An enormous amount of work has gone into this section where the world's literature has been critically reviewed and even recalculated to bring together in two or three pages a synopsis on each drug or group of drugs. The data provided usually include dosage, half life, volume of distribution, plasma clearance, and cord/maternal plasma ratio for the drug. There are more than 500 references so although the design of the book necessitates brevity, those who seek will find—from antibiotic to anticonvulsant.

Generally then, this is a book for obstetricians with a pharmacological bias. It is not light reading but the scientific contents cannot be faulted. It has great merit for those in this narrow field.

#### Reference

- <sup>1</sup> Hytten FE, Chamberlain GVP. *Clinical physiology in obstetrics*. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1980.

J G BISSENDEN

**Paediatric Developmental Therapy.** Edited by S Levitt. Pp 265: £12.80 paperback. Blackwell, 1984.

This is a multiauthor book by representatives of the three main therapy disciplines—physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy; and the editor is herself a physiotherapist. It reviews the roles and contributions of these

therapists in childhood disability and handicap. There are chapters on the principles of development and assessment, and on the problems of multidisciplinary teams which show the extent to which a theoretical basis is shared by these three disciplines. These introductory chapters are followed by a series of contributions on specific problems and disorders. Each chapter includes both discussion of the aims of therapy and numerous practical suggestions.

Inevitably there is some overlap between chapters and there are some differences of opinion, but in the current state of the art this is a strength rather than a weakness. The standard of writing and presentation is high and the editor's controlling hand can be clearly discerned. There are no bad chapters, but several are outstanding. In particular, the section on 'Brittle bones' is a model of clear, concise writing on a rather obscure subject. I also enjoyed the courageous though rather ambitious attempt to relate research in movement physiology and psychology to the everyday work of the therapist.

The orientation of the editor evidently explains the relatively small amount of space devoted to language and communication disorders, and in particular I thought the various methods of alternative communication deserved more detailed attention. The application of behavioural techniques to the therapies also merits a complete chapter to itself and perhaps a more authoritative discussion. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the techniques recommended by the authors is sadly deficient and perhaps this difficulty should be discussed, particularly in relation to areas which overlap with education such as learning difficulties.

These are small criticisms. *Paediatric Developmental Therapy* brings together a great deal of information and practical experience. At this price it should be within the reach of all professionals involved in child handicap, and may perhaps also be useful to the more sophisticated parent.

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