

largely irrelevant. The interested reader will find more information in the proceedings of two international meetings already held for neonatal thyroid screening.

There is a comprehensive review of sporadic congenital hypothyroidism by Foley. The contribution of Delange *et al* on transient hypothyroidism is extensive and contains useful messages. Sick, usually preterm infants and iodine deficiency seem to be the prerequisites for this syndrome. The list of possible drug and environmentally induced causes of neonatal hypothyroidism discussed by Walfish is most valuable. I was astounded to learn that in an area of severe iodine deficiency, such as Zaire, the incidence of congenital hypothyroidism is 500 times higher than in Europe and North America.

The final section on treatment is also a disappointment. Considerable effort is expended to illustrate how unreliable are the clinical symptoms and signs of congenital hypothyroidism—surely a fact that is fully appreciated and has been acted on for nearly 10 years now by the introduction of mass screening programmes. I was hoping to be educated on the psychological and neurological development in treated infants, but sadly this topic was discussed in a cursory manner. Perhaps this, more than any other part of the monograph, illustrated that the editors could have done better had they spread their net further to encompass other groups of workers who have made important contributions to the subject of congenital hypothyroidism. Paediatricians and endocrinologists working on neonatal hypothyroid screening programmes will find parts of this monograph valuable; I would not advocate it to a wider readership.

I A HUGHES

Antimicrobial Therapy for Newborns. 2nd ed. By G H McCracken and J D Nelson. Pp 234: \$24.50 hardback. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1983.

Antibiotics and treatment of infection in the newborn have moved a long way in five years. This is reflected in the updating of this well known book which contains a great deal of new information. The overall format has not changed and the book is compact and easily read. Half the book deals systematically with each antibiotic, with much personal data included in this gathering together of the published reports on the pharmacology, dosing, and side

effects of the drugs. The second half of the book covers rapid diagnosis and the treatment of the specific infections, for example meningitis. Finally there are short but well balanced discussions on difficult practical problems—the acquisition of resistant flora, the role (or lack of) of prophylactic antibodies, and the management of outbreaks of infection in a neonatal unit.

Inevitably the data cannot be up to date. Only those in the field can name, for instance, all the cephalosporins on trial in neonatal units in this country alone, and not all of these are mentioned in the book. The most recent papers quoted are from 1982 and the results of the latest collaborative trial comparing ampicillin and amikacin against moxalactam, are not yet known. Finally, one must remember that the book is for the American market and written about infections in America.

Nevertheless, in the field there are none better, and anyone working in neonatal care would do well to read this book, to learn about the advantages and disadvantages of the antibiotics available, and to ensure rational use in their neonatal unit.

J G BISSENDEN

Asthma in Childhood. By A D Milner. Pp 66: £1.50 paperback. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1984.

This small book crams an immense amount of concisely written information into its 66 pages and, writing from the admittedly inexperienced viewpoint of parent of a 9 year old daughter recently diagnosed as asthmatic, I would recommend it to the parents of any asthmatic child.

By means of a simple but effective question and answer format the author gives a clear general picture of both the symptoms and possible causes of asthma with a brief but helpful look at the highly complex subject of allergies. The various tests used to diagnose asthma are described, as are their purposes, and a comprehensive breakdown of the various drugs and courses of treatment currently available is given, together with helpful comments on possible side effects. The great majority of these drugs are remarkably safe and effective and can be used over long periods; however the author also includes a reassuring paragraph on the controlled occasional use of systemic steroids.

Unconventional methods of treatment such as homeopathy, herbal remedies,

and hypnosis are briefly touched on, as are the use of ionisers and humidifiers. Professor Milner is not in general convinced of their efficacy but recognises the fact that they have been known to prove useful in some cases. The importance of a calm, unworried attitude on the part of the parents is constantly stressed: the contents of this book should do much to ensure that this attitude is entirely unforced and genuine.

SARAH GLEADE

Disorders of the Respiratory Tract in Children. 4th ed. By E L Kendig and V Chernick. Pp 968: £75.00 hardback. London: W B Saunders, 1983.

The previous edition of this book was published in 1977. In the last seven years there have been many changes in our approach to respiratory problems, particularly in the neonatal period, so this new edition is not before its time. The main format is unchanged, although there is new blood among the authors and nine new topics have been covered including pulmonary complications of gastro-oesophageal reflux, immotile cilia syndrome, Legionnaire's disease, and the sudden infant death syndrome. As before, the first section covers the anatomical and physiological development of the lung; examination, diagnostic and treatment procedures, lung function testing, and the effects of age. The next section, on respiratory intensive care, is relatively brief and followed by 90 pages on neonatal respiratory problems including congenital abnormalities. The viral and bacterial infections are grouped together. The fifth section comprises non-infective problems including asthma, emphysema, fibrosing alveolitis, and reflux. Diseases which also have effects outside the lung are discussed in the remaining third of the book.

Many of the sections are disappointing and have been dealt with far better in individual texts elsewhere. This is particularly true of the chapters on lung physiology, intensive and neonatal care, and the more common respiratory problems including asthma and cystic fibrosis. The book's strength lies in the fact that it is comprehensive and will be an invaluable reference source for those caring for children with obscure lung diseases. It is apparent from the bibliography that it has had a relatively long gestation; none of the references are for papers written after

1981. Nevertheless, this represents the unchallenged comprehensive statement on paediatric respiratory disease and should therefore be welcomed.

A D MILNER

Daily Living with a Handicapped Child. By D Millard. Pp 103: £8.95 paperback. London: Croom Helm, 1984.

This book discusses a philosophy and some of the practical aspects of management for handicapped children. It is intended for parents but I doubt whether most parents will find it easy to read as it tends to talk about them rather than to them. I wish the sections on bath aids, seating, and feeding cerebral palsied infants were as thorough and as well illustrated as the sections on feeding aids and clothing.

Aids to communication and environmental control systems are neglected. Continence and spina bifida is no longer so dependent on diversionary surgery as is implied. The use of catheters is not discussed and there is an underestimate of the potential for bowel continence. The paraphrased medical advice to parents of children with epilepsy, asthma, and cystic fibrosis would be disputed by many doctors.

The need for physically handicapped children to learn to adapt to a world and family which do not view them as central is well put.

The cartoons of the smoking mother reading a magazine and dribbling the contents of the feeding bottle over her baby on to the carpet in front of the expectant cat, and of the father, empty beer glass in hand swinging his legs on a bar stool are patronising and offensive. Pictures of seating systems would have been more useful.

The tendency of therapists to tell parents that certain activities are *vital* and others should *never* occur diminishes credibility. The book may be of interest to child development centre libraries. It needs firmer editing, more information, and a contemporary system for giving full references.

I A MCKINLAY

Neurological Evaluation of Infants and Children. By H W Baird and E C Gordon. (Clinics in Developmental Medicine 4/85). Pp 250: £12.00 hardback. London: Spastics International Medical Publications (Blackwell Scientific), 1983.

This book describes the authors' approach to assessing a young child presenting with a possible neurological problem. The emphasis is on defining the child's problems rather than subsequent management. The authors make the point very convincingly that neurological examination in young children is not adult neurology scaled down. The writing style has the feel of personal experience and avoids long Germanic constructions. The detailed handling of the consultation, child, and family is discussed, including the gleanings of as much information as possible before the actual meeting, the avoidance of undressing and weighing young children at the beginning, and hints on making a relationship with young children. The importance of observing without handling is stressed as is the need to vary the order of items according to changing mood.

The authors are very specific about details of the neurological examination and how to evaluate children with particular types of presentation, for example fits, possible cerebral palsy, speech and language problems, developmental delay, and behaviour disorders. No photographs of patients are included but good quality line drawings illustrate the neurological signs. Although the newborn and floppy infant are covered, these two subjects are not dealt with in great detail because they each have separate volumes in this series. The book ends by pointing out that parents need a summary and counselling, and that the conclusions must be communicated to the many agencies who may be involved with the child and family.

I recommend this as a relatively inexpensive book about the art as well as the science of paediatric neurology for general paediatricians, paediatricians in training, and paediatricians in the community.

A WHITELAW

Extrahepatic Biliary Atresia. Edited by F Daum. Pp 280: Sfr 122 hardback. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1983.

This monograph reports papers presented at a two day symposium held in November 1981 in New York, on a subject which because of continuing advances in both pathogenesis and management remains highly topical.

No doubt the drinking together of so many authorities provided the opportunity for a useful exchange of ideas and may even have catalysed fresh researches. One

must say, however, that for the reviewer this documentary account seems a rather disappointing reflection, being published after a gestation of elephantine duration and consisting of rather brief and somewhat shallow already published papers (some long since). Nor can the reader eavesdrop on the conference discussion periods, which for those with a special interest are often of greatest value and the more revealing part of any meeting. In this particular respect the editor and publisher have not produced a work of the standard that we are accustomed to seeing from the CIBA Foundation (for example, CIBA Foundation Symposium No 70, New Series, Excerpta Medica 1979).

Having said this, the book will provide for those wishing it a rapid, though superficial overview of biliary atresia. Included are sections on the aetiology and evaluation of biliary atresia, including the exciting but hitherto unconfirmed work on causation by reovirus 3—already published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1982. The results of hepatoporoenterostomy are also presented with data from Japan (Sendai), London, and the United States. There is also a short section on the contribution of hepatic transplantation in childhood with its greatly improved prognosis after the introduction of cyclosporin A in the late 1970s. The nutritional aspects of management are also discussed (in 36 pages) and finally there are eight short research papers mostly on topics related to cholestasis. Although this work is well produced and illustrated, it is not a book many will wish to purchase because of the limitations outlined above; virtually all of the information is readily accessible elsewhere.

JOHN GLASGOW

Shorter notices

Case Presentations in Paediatrics. By V Joss and S J Rose. Pp 264: £6.95 paperback. London: Butterworth, 1983.

This lively and entertaining book contains 77 cases ranging from the commonplace to the esoteric. Written primarily for candidates for membership of the Royal College of Physicians, it enlivens coffee time discussions for all paediatric junior staff.

The cases are 'grey' enough to encourage controversy, but the well referenced discussion after each case settles almost all the diagnostic arguments.