many parents are preoccupied with other things and, worst of all, have received no instruction in the arts of parenting. Surely this should now become a priority in education, and Tim Chambers’ comment on this subject in the same issue is highly apposite. Until we produce a generation (from which will come tomorrow’s leaders) who respect and understand the needs of children we are unlikely to make much progress.

References

Desmond Creery
La Jaoniere des Houguets,
St Savious, Guernsey.

Professor Smithells comments:
You, Sir, asked me to consider using ‘British’ rather than ‘English’ as a matter of editorial policy, and Dr Creery asks for another reason. I was anxious not to generalise beyond personal experience. I also have a sneaking suspicion that in some respects at least, such as an appreciation of education, the Scots (perhaps the Welsh, too) may be less culpable than the English. Our hearts bleed for the children of Northern Ireland, but their cycle of violence is attributable, not to their parents, but to terrorists, most of whom appear too young to be able to think a generation ahead.

The NSPCC/RSPCA comparison is an old favourite, but not to be pressed too far. The NSPCC obtained its Royal Charter from Queen Victoria in 1895 (admittedly 70 years later than the RSPCA) and enjoys royal presidency and patronage. Its Scottish counterpart was granted a Royal Charter in 1922 and has been the RSSPCC ever since.

The most important point in Dr Creery’s letter is in his opening sentence: ‘some years ago’ he ‘gave up the somewhat unequal struggle of supporting children . . . ’

Alone he cannot make progress; nor can I; nor, individually, can the many kind people from whom I have received messages of agreement. It is paediatricians collectively, through a strong national organisation and in concert with other professional and voluntary bodies that care about children, who must be joint advocates for the next generation.

Book reviews


The diagnosis of intraventricular haemorrhage in the newborn no longer depends on the finding of blood in the lumbar CSF and the arguments about whether it was a ‘bloody tap’. We now have ultrasound and no major special care baby unit worth its salt would be without its scanner. Many of us using the technique are self-taught, and with the increasing proliferation of machines and interest in this field a neonatal brain scanner’s handbook has become an urgent need. This book admirably fulfils that need. In 13 chapters the authors cover the whole field of neonatal cerebral ultrasound scanning, including a chapter on the spine. Following a simple lesson in physics there is an important chapter on scanning techniques and normal anatomy. There are separate chapters on intracranial haemorrhage, periventricular haemorrhage, and its sequelae which relates to the development of ventricular dilatation and porencephaly rather than neurological handicap, which is beyond the intended scope of the book. Intracranial cysts, non-cystic malformations, miscellaneous anomalies such as cerebral oedema, calcification, tumours, atrophy, and hydrocephalus are all discussed. There is a chapter on ultrasound appearances in the congenital TORCH infections and in acute meningitis. Finally, a comparison of ultrasound with computed tomography and nuclear magnetic resonance. The text is succinct and directed to the ultrasound appearances and interpretations of the disorders mentioned rather than to their aetiology, pathology, or management. There are over 200 scan pictures with explanatory diagrams and autopsy specimens. Each chapter has a comprehensive list of references.

I would recommend this book to all neonatal scanners to be kept near the machine as a reference atlas. My only caveat is the usual problem of the way x rays and scan pictures look so clear on the screen but are so disappointing when produced in books. All the scan pictures in this book are interpretable and some come out well, but many are rather dark and need close scrutiny. Nevertheless, well worth the money.

BRIAN SPEIDEL


This book consists of 17 scholarly, well referenced chapters dealing with scientific and practical aspects of epilepsy, directed at neurologists and ‘those in related fields’. It is one of the Butterworths International Medical Reviews in Neurology (the successor to Modern Trends) in which the series editors Marsden and Asbury aim to emphasise how basic research may change clinical practice. In this it succeeds and must therefore be seriously considered by the many readers of the Archives who are concerned with the problems of seizures.

The authors, mostly from the United States, some from continental Europe, are predominantly neurologists or neuroscientists without a specific interest in childhood, but there is much to interest paediatricians. Basic biochemical (neurotransmitter) and neurophysiological chapters are welcome, although these fields rapidly advance. The mechanism of action of antiepileptic drugs is discussed in considerable detail, but the reader should question whether the various proposed