

**Congenital Metabolic Diseases. Diagnosis and Treatment.** (Clinical Paediatric Series vol 2) Edited by R A Wapnir. Pp 448: \$90.00 hardback. Marcel Dekker, 1985.

The stated purpose of this series is 'to continuously update the knowledge of the practicing physician'. This volume is the second in the series and is on inborn errors of metabolism. It is the proceedings of an international conference of invited speakers (all but one from the USA) which, by deduction, I think was held in 1983. The book consists of 23 chapters in eight sections; the heritage of Sir Archibald Garrod, new approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of genetic disease (about DNA), problems of screening for inborn errors, disorders of aminoacid metabolism, diseases of energy metabolism, problems of abnormal storage diseases, inherited disorders of membrane transport and receptors, and inborn errors of purine metabolism and urea synthesis.

Most of the chapters are either summaries of the work of the author in that field or original papers rather than more general reviews. Much of the work presented is biochemical, some very detailed although some of the chapters are more clinical such as the paper on how long to continue the diet in phenylketonuria. The book is not comprehensive, however, and many subjects of current interest are covered only briefly or omitted altogether.

I found some of the English grim, for example, 'metabolic dishomeostasis is the

harbinger of incipient disease' as well as the split infinitive with which the book starts (*vide supra*). It will be apparent that it cannot be recommended for the general paediatrician to learn about recent advances in this field. The subtitle is quite misleading. For the specialist there are several interesting papers such as the one on the enzymology of more than 440 cases of glycogen storage disease studied in one laboratory. The book is very expensive, however, so copies will remain elusive even in libraries.

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**Born Too Early. Special Care for Your Preterm Baby.** By M Redshaw, R Rivers, D Rosenblatt. Pp 265: £6.95 paperback, £12.00 hardback. Oxford University Press, 1985.

This book sets out to educate and inform parents of preterm infants on the various problems likely to be experienced by their infants and themselves during the first anxious weeks of life and the following postneonatal period. In this aim it succeeds; often to the point of overwhelming the lay reader with information.

There are chapters which discuss in depth the causes and management of preterm delivery: the medical and nursing care required by these infants, and the rationale of intensive care. The chapters discussing

the psychological needs of preterm infants and their families and those problems of the early months following discharge are especially valuable. Most parents will find helpful the frank, yet encouraging information on the future prospects for these initially disadvantaged infants. The book also contains chapters written with great tact and sympathy on the distressing subject of infant death, and plans for future pregnancies.

Overall, the book contains a wealth of information and valuable further reading and support group information. There is also a helpful glossary of medical terms. All of this information is compressed into 250 pages of clearly written text which is well laid out and illustrated, both by photograph and line drawings.

I fear that there will be few parents who will find time to work their way through such a fund of information at the stressful time of the birth of their preterm infant.

I have no doubt that those who do make the effort will find the experience most valuable, but they will need to be highly motivated and intelligent. I have no doubt that every special care baby unit and neonatal intensive care unit should have several copies of this book available for the use of staff members, as well as for loan to enquiring parents. Overall it provides a balanced view of the management of preterm infants and their problems, and I would have no hesitation in recommending it to selected parents.

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