Book reviews

The Health and Social Needs of Physically Handicapped Young Adults: Are They Being Met by the Statutory Services? Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology Supplement No 50. By A Thomas, M Bax, K Coombes, E Goldson, D Smyth, K Whitmore. Pp 20: £2.00 paperback. Spastics International/Blackwell Scientific, 1985.

As the foreword to this slimmest of booklets states, the handicapped child has great emotional appeal for fund raising; the adult, even the young adult, does not. The rejection of the young handicapped adult may be because 'in some way they reveal to us who we are'. However such rejection arises, its results are only too evident in a large and complex advanced society such as that of the United Kingdom. This summary of studies reveals these defects in provision with striking clarity and excellent documentation.

It concerns the services and resources available to physically handicapped young people from the age of 16, when they leave the shelter of school and the comprehensive care of paediatricians. As one would expect, much of the research quoted related to numerically dominant groups, to cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and muscular dystrophy.

The majority of such young adults lost contact with health services and did not know how to find the speech therapists, physiotherapists, and others who were important to them; there is much evidence that their needs were not being met. Widespread dispersal of these young people presents a problem, not least in documenting their use of and need for orthopaedic intervention.

The three main categories of difficulties vis à vis housing adaptations and the provision and repair of aids and equipment will come as no surprise to those in the field: no provision, poor assessment and resulting unsatisfactory provision—all were prominent.

It seems that incontinence is often poorly dealt with, insufficiently investigated, and prescribed few aids. Dental health, too, needs attention; sex counselling is a pressing need—it is often inadequate and largely ineffective, and factual sexual knowledge may be poor. These young people also

have many other anxieties, related to marriage and the production of children, to employment, and to housing.

This booklet is not just a catalogue of a sorry state of affairs. It is a valuable reference source that is well written and easy to read, but it also proposes some solutions to the young people's lack of support, in particular the formation of a Handicapped Adult Team. Alternatively, in some situations a well placed and dynamic individual professional may achieve much. Whatever solution is found, this survey will probably provide much of the ammunition necessary to improve the lot of older children whose future already fills their paediatricians with alarm.

ANNE CHAMBERLAIN

Pediatric Thyroidology. (Pediatric and Adolescent Endocrinology). Edited by F Delange, D A Fisher, P Malraux. Pp 412: \$117.25 hardback. S Karger AG, 1985.

This is a multi-author volume, the 14th title in the series 'Pediatric and Adolescent Endocrinology' under the general editorship of Dr Zvi Laron. It contains 26 chapters grouped into 13 sections, which cover most aspects of the development, function, and malfunction of the thyroid axis in the fetus, infant, and child.

The ugly title and the dull brown cover (bearing one of those flow diagrams in which thyroid hormones scatter in all directions) suggest that this is a down to earth work of science, and so indeed it proves. Each chapter is a concise topic review. Although few are a pleasure to read, most are thoroughly workmanlike and packed with well organised and well referenced facts that are admirably up to date. The chapters on development and function are of particular interest, reflecting the rapid recent advances in knowledge of these areas, but those on the clinical aspects of thyroid disease in childhood cover rather superficially much well trodden ground. The book is well produced but expensive.

This is not a reference book on thyroid disease for the general paediatrician, but as a synopsis of current understanding of the

pathophysiology of thyroid disease in childhood it will prove extremely valuable.

NICK BARNES

Practical Pediatric Therapy. Edited by H F Eichenwald, J Ströder. Pp 1169: DM280 hardback. VCH Publishers, 1985.

The authors set out to compile a book on paediatric therapy 'based on the knowledge and experience of North America and Europe'. Each section is written jointly by an American and German author and there are 97 contributors in all. Despite this, the style throughout is uniform and clear. The 35 chapters include neonatology, nutrition, behavioural disorders, abuse and neglect, allergy, immunisations, antimicrobials, infections, oncology, and accidents and poisoning, as well as the system disorders and surgical conditions.

There is usually a brief outline of the aetiology and features of the disorder but the emphasis is on treatment. In general, this is up to date and detailed. Questionable practices are criticised. Dosages are given in mg/kg or M², but SI units are not employed.

I enjoyed the comprehensive neonatology chapter (64 pages) outlining intensive and special care. There are omissions, however—for instance, there is no mention of anaemia of prematurity or folate requirement. The account of the principles of antimicrobial treatment is excellent, including data on the new penicillins and cephalosporins. Sound guidance is given on immunisations, including the current views on timing and contraindications. The surgical chapters give a useful, brief account of the management of common disorders, and the orthopaedic section is illustrated.

In places, the effort to be completely comprehensive causes cluttering with statements of the obvious. For instance, the section on neonatal resuscitation states that the resuscitation bag should not leak and the operator should be familiar with his equipment. Unfortunately, the index is muddled and often quotes the wrong page number.