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Book reviews

Mental Handicap: a Multi-disciplinary Approach. Edited by M Craft, J Bicknall, S Hollins. Pp 421: £30·00 hardback. Bailliere-Tindall/W B Saunders, 1985.

This book is the successor to Tredgold's *Mental Handicap*. The book has been entirely rewritten, however, to reflect the changes in practice and philosophy that have occurred in recent years. The emphasis throughout the book is on a multiprofessional approach to service planning and provision to meet the needs of the individual with a handicap. As such, it is an ambitious undertaking and I think a successful one, weaving together contributions from over 40 authors currently active in treatment and research.

The book is written in five sections. The first part is an overview, including chapters on service organisation, residential needs and services, evaluation, social policy, and a useful perspective from North American experience. The second part deals with legal considerations in the lives of persons with handicap; the third part, described 'The Person with Mental Handicap', discusses causation, families, counselling, and other social and personal aspects. The fourth part is a group of chapters on education, commencing in infancy, working through to adult education, and again with a contribution from North America in one chapter. The fifth part labelled intervention essentially describes the role of various agencies in the support and treatment of persons and families.

It is inevitable that in a book of this size with the number of contributors involved there will be some contradiction and overlap. This is a minor criticism, however, because throughout the book the emphasis upon a multidisciplinary approach to the various problems of mental handicap is maintained, and such an approach will embrace differences of opinion. I think this is the book's major success, moving away as it does from the primarily medical model of its predecessor into the multiprofessional team approach. With some minor exceptions, the book is extremely well researched and referenced. Some of the chapters are very good indeed, especially, from the paediatrician's point of view, the sections on early parent counselling and early intervention.

This book will have a wide appeal among paediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, community nursing staff teachers, and all the other disciplines involved in the care, support, and education of persons with mental handicap. I would strongly recommend this book to persons in these disciplines and also to paediatricians in general paediatrics as well as those concerned in developmental paediatrics.

M F SMITH

Genetic and Metabolic Disease in Paediatrics. BIMR paediatrics. Vol 5. Edited by J K Lloyd, C R Scriver. Pp 324: £45·00 hardback. Butterworths, 1985.

This book consists mainly of a selection of informative and up to date reviews of recent advances in genetic diseases. Roughly speaking, it can be divided into sections on basic genetics and gene mapping and mutations; recent advances in the lactic acidaemias; disorders of urea synthesis; the hyperphenylalanaemias and the hyperlipidaemias. There are then sections on maternal–fetal relationships and finally an excellent section on tissue resistance to hormones exemplifying the syndromes of androgen resistance. The editors have done well to obtain a high standard from individual contributors.

Of necessity, however, there must be some degree of inhomogeneity. For example, Isabel Smith's review of the hyperphenylalanaemias takes broad perspective, quotes the classical and original references, and there is some degree of self criticism, whereas the article on disorders of urea synthesis by Brusilow does not allow the reader to conceptualise the subject as well, and there is not that critical touch that one might expect from work of such high standard. Similarly, G R Thompson's review of the hyperlipidaemias (which are rare in childhood) does not emphasise the brilliant work on receptors for which Brown and Levy were awarded the Nobel Prize. Brian H Robinson's discussion of the lactic acidaemias throws light on a most complex field and elucidates the complexities of the enzymemopathies elegantly. Lysosomal problems are well discussed by Sly and Sundaram and one is kept up to date with current concepts, which they describe logically; and the molecular basis of clinical heterogeneity in osteogenesis imperfecta is an excellent update by Byers and Bonado of recent advances in the subject for which they are mainly responsible. One envisages that this sort of work will form the basis for our further understanding of diseases of adult life, which in future will probably be found to have a genetic and therefore molecular basis.

Stacey's section on maternal–fetal metabolic homeostasis is a pleasure to read. It shows clarity, but one wonders as one does about Harvey Levy's excellent review in a similar field whether it is entirely relevant to a book on genetic disease.

The reviewer did not worry too much about this because the book was so informative and most of the articles were so well written. This is, however, a book for someone who has had a good understanding of what used to be called inborn errors of metabolism and is best read in conjunction with a book on molecular biology, because without this and some knowledge of cell structure the reader can get lost in understanding the levels at which biochemical processes occur. A few well designed diagrams early on in the text may have been more helpful.

Broad perspective is offered by the distinguished editors who emphasise the often missed obvious fact of the stability of normal genetic mechanisms. This book gives excellent examples of disorders of genes, of peptide and protein synthesis, those where molecules travel in and out of the mitochondria, lysosomal disorders and receptors. There is nothing touching transport mechanisms, but Garrod's infant born in the early nineteen hundreds is a growing child if not a late maturer and one envisages much more growth and development. One hopes that the younger paediatrician who is well grounded in modern biochemistry will buy this and keep it on his shelf and use it as a useful guide in the next few years to come.

LEONARD SINCLAIR

Textbook on Pediatric Clinical Pharmacology. The basis of rational drug therapy in children. Edited by S M MacLeod. Pp 467: £45·00 hardback. PSG Publishing (Wright), 1985.

As the authors state in their introduction this textbook attempts to present a com-