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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-

prehensive view of paediatric clinical pharmacology. The book is divided into four sections. The first section is a good introduction to both physiology and pharmacology and their inter-relation in particular in the growing child. The second section, although entitled clinical pharmacokinetics, deals with this subject in a very brief manner. The last two sections, which comprise the major part of the book, deal in separate chapters with either the pharmacology of a given system or relate to specific topics such as perinatal pharmacology or pharmacogenetics.

This is certainly a useful book, which is easy to read, and in particular its linkage between physiology and pharmacology is done in a clear and concise manner. As it is designed as a comprehensive textbook, however, there are several obvious omissions, which are disappointing. There is no description of the pharmacology of the central nervous system, and in particular anticonvulsants are not adequately discussed. As this is an area of paediatric clinical pharmacology where there has been extensive research this omission is even more surprising. Compliance, drug surveillance, and toxicity are dealt with inadequately. Although one recognises that it takes a considerable amount of time to write a book such as this, it is disappointing to see that recent trends such as zinc treatment for Wilson's disease merit only one sentence.

Despite the criticisms this is a useful book that should certainly find its way into the libraries of most paediatric departments. There now exists several textbooks of paediatric clinical pharmacology, and no doubt in the next few years several more will be brought onto the market. There still remains, however, a clear need for a shorter introduction to paediatric clinical pharmacology aimed at the paediatric registrar/research fellow/consultant who does not wish to become a paediatric clinical pharmacologist but would like to extend his or her knowledge of the subject.

I A CHOONARA

Emergency Management of Pediatric Trauma. By T A Mayer. Pp 552: £78·00 hardback. W B Saunders, 1985.

This is a multi-author book from the United States hoping to be a very comprehensive reference work on the emergency care of the injured child. Indeed, it contains some worthwhile sections. I was particularly impressed by the chapters on child abuse by David Kerns and on sexual abuse by Judith Cheek. They both provide valuable guidelines for dealing with these sensitive subjects. The sections that deal with injuries to children with specific chronic diseases are also of practical value. The diseases covered include cardiac disease, haematological disorders, chronic lung disease, and renal disease.

The book, however, is disappointing in certain aspects. The section on head injuries provides little guidance on the assessment of the apparently minor head injury and how long and where such children should be observed. The chapter on poisoning fails to deal with the social aspects of this common problem. Although the introductory chapters are very comprehensive, they clearly refer to the situation in the United States and contain reference to techniques such as transfusion into the bone marrow that are not widely used in Britain.

At the price of £78 this book is unlikely to be bought by many individuals for their personal use; existing texts such as that by Cynthia Illingworth fill that market well. However, because of the comprehensive nature of the book it could well fill a demand for use in the accident and emergency department or the paediatric ward that deals with trauma.

J R SIBERT

The Skin and Systemic Disease in Children. By S Hurwitz. Pp 416: hardback. Year Book Medical Publishers, 1985.

If a junior medical student is asked to list the main systems of the body he is quite likely to omit one of the most important systems and certainly the most accessible, the skin. Professor Hurwitz sets out to correct this by a description of those systemic diseases that show skin manifestations, an interesting and original approach. He has chosen to do this by devoting each chapter to a separate group of conditions—for example, neurocutaneous disorders, metabolic errors, infectious diseases, etc.—and then describing in considerable detail the main diseases with cutaneous signs.

He is well placed to do this as he holds Chairs in both Paediatrics and Dermatology, and he has succeeded brilliantly. Descriptions of skin lesions are, as one would expect, very full and detailed, and it is a pleasure to read such a clear and well written text. For instance, the reviewer cannot recall a better description of Kawasaki disease, and other mysteries such as the distinction between toxic epidermal necrolysis and the staphylococcal scalded skin syndrome are clarified. The tables, which I always find most useful in books, are numerous and informative.

I must, however, enter one complaint. The quality of the illustrations does not always match up to the excellence of the text, and a book whose main theme is skin pathology would gain greatly from some coloured illustrations. This, however, is something that can be improved in future editions, and a book of this quality deserves it.

Professor Hurwitz says in the preface that this book was largely conceived and compiled during convalescence, and how indebted paediatricians will be to this well referenced and authoritative work.

J LUDER