Book reviews

Contemporary Issues in Fetal and Neonatal Medicine 1. Perinatal Anaesthesia. Edited by J W Scanlon. Pp 300: £32.50. Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1985.

The title of this book is unfortunate, as to the uninformed it may imply a treatise on obstetric and neonatal anaesthesia. Instead, it fills a lacuna in available medical textbooks and should be of interest to the many disciplines concerned with the perinatal period. Those who read it hopefully may gain insight into the recently advanced concepts that are exciting to all thinking obstetric anaesthetists who are so often the final common pathway in the production of the neonate.

The disadvantages of multi-authorship are illustrated by the impression that some chapters are not of the same high standard of presentation and information as others. The chapter on anaesthesia for high risk obstetrics reflects transatlantic practice and makes recommendations that are unacceptable to British obstetric anaesthetists—for example, the administration of 100% oxygen to a mother being anaesthetised for caesarean section would result in an unacceptably high incidence of awareness. I did not feel my neonatal colleagues would become reasonably informed about obstetric general anaesthesia from this chapter. By contrast the chapter on regional anaesthesia for labour and delivery is practical, informative, and succinct.

I was somewhat surprised that in relation to the management of the diabetic patient more emphasis is not made on the use of continuous insulin infusions that have revolutionised the intrapartum care of these patients.

The editor's choice of authors actively involved clinically at the 'cutting edge of any topic' is admirably illustrated in the chapter on maternal disease and anaesthesia. One has the strong impression that this author has actually clinically managed and thought about these conditions.

For those of us involved in the care of the pregnant patient the chapters on psychoteratology and the behavioural effects of drugs administered during pregnancy, maternal obstetric medication, and newborn behaviour make stimulating reading and are excellent reviews of the results of the many studies of perinatal events and behavioural outcome.

This book merits a place in hospital and departmental libraries for perusal by established clinicians involved and interested in understanding the physiology and subsequent management of the altered physiology in the perinatal period.

ROSEMARY MACDONALD

Diseases of Children. 5th edition. By H Jolly and M I Levene. Pp 694: £24.50 hardback. Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1985.

Since the first edition of this book appeared in 1964 an entire generation of paediatricians has benefited from Dr Jolly's teaching; it is a daunting task, so soon after his death, to attempt to review the latest edition that, despite the inclusion of Dr Levene as co-author, still reflects Jolly's personal practice and his didactic approach to teaching.

The format remains unchanged. After introductory chapters on history taking and on general aspects of child care and development, paediatric medicine is presented systematically, with separate chapters on speech disorders, skin diseases, accidents, and poisoning. A major strength remains the common sense approach to the handling of everyday paediatric problems, although the passage of more than two decades since the first edition is apparent in continuing overemphasis of the role of psychological factors in such disorders as asthma, constipation, and migraine, in the omission of recent developments such as neonatal thyroid screening and surgery for intrahepatic biliary atresia, and in the inclusion of obsolete terminology for chromosomal disorders. As always, the chapters on growth and development and on mental and physical handicap are a delight to read.

This book can be strongly recommended to medical students, to paediatric residents, and to vocational trainees for general practice. It will be of less value to paediatric registrars and clinical medical officers who will search in vain for answers to some fashionable parental anxieties; a book that tells us how to predict the adult height of aspiring ballet dancers could reasonably be expected to include some comment on the role of food additives in

hyperactivity, on the place of oligoantigenic diets in the investigation of colic, migraine, and behaviour disorders, and on the role of early exposure to wheat containing weaning foods in the pathogenesis of coeliac disease. Dr Levene will doubtless be correcting these and other omissions in the next edition; meantime I will continue to recommend Jolly to my more interested students and housemen.

GEORGE RUSSELL

Food for Thought: a Parent's Guide to Food Intolerance. By M K Minchin. 2nd ed. Pp 250: £3.95 paperback. Oxford University Press, 1986.

A seriously overstated case for allergy or intolerance is combined with a virulent attack on doctors, 'junk food', slow release pesticides, cigarette smoking, and pollution in this biased and unbalanced review. The advice given is inconsistent, unorthodox, at times bizarre, and on occasions frankly dangerous. To those attracted to the notion that all symptoms in childhood are due to allergy, this book will appeal.

T J DAVID

Paediatric Diagnostic Images. By C Gyll and N S Blake. Pp 232: £29.95 hardback. William Heinemann, 1986.

This book is divided into eight chapters and has been written by a superintendent radiographer from a children's hospital as well as a radiologist from a children's hospital. Just over 90% of the book is dedicated to radiology. One hundred pages of the book are dedicated to the skeleton, with an important section focusing on injuries of different sorts.

Chapters two through to seven discuss various different anatomical areas of the body, and each chapter begins with a radiographic description followed by what one may term the medical or radiological input. There is a great deal of very valuable information in the technical details of how to acquire adequate radiographs. The latter part of all these chapters fails to give a critical assessment of what is required and in certain areas is frankly misleading—for example, under stridor no mention is made of the crucial importance of a lateral view

on the barium swallow, and the indications for a lateral chest radiograph are missing. The final chapter on imaging is very brief; the ultrasound section does not give any indication of the technique required nor does it address the difficult problem of the reliability of this modality.

The title of the book is misleading as what is essentially covered is 'How to obtain paediatric x rays (images)'. This book will be most useful to radiographers both in training and also in post but its use even to trainee radiologists from a radiological/paediatric point of view will be rather limited. In the first 200 pages of the book there is virtually no attempt to put into perspective the use of ultrasound, radionuclear imaging, and computed tomography.

I GORDON

Muscle Biopsy. A Practical Approach. By V Dubowitz. Pp 720: £45.00 hardback. Balliere-Tindall, 1985.

This is not just a book for pathologists. A rapid advance in the diagnosis of muscle disease began in the 1950s when clinicians like R D Adams, Milton Shy, and J N Walton readopted the 19th century habit of studying the pathology as well as the patient. Histochemistry gave a major new impetus, and the authors of the first (1973) edition of this book, Professor Dubowitz and Dr M H Brooke, were at the forefront of the histochemical revolution. Their book caught the crest of the wave of developing interest in muscle disorders and set modern standards of practice.

Professor Dubowitz alone has taken on the revision for the second edition. It is largely rewritten and much expanded. There are new chapters on electron microscopy and the new techniques of immunocytochemistry by C A Sewry and R Fitzsimons. Many of Dr Brooke's special contributions to the first edition have been retained, although his characteristic histochemical bar graphs, which never quite caught on in clinical practice, have been left out. The hallmark of the book is its complete mastery of both the clinical and pathological sides of the subject, and every one of the many hundreds of illustrations of pathology in the major systematic section of the book is related to a case history, greatly enhancing the book's value as a permanent source.

As always when an author is exhaustive and up to date there is scope for disagreement about matters of emphasis and classi-

fication, but there is no doubt that this is the authoritative work on the subject, and especially so for paediatric readers who are fortunate that the author's main experience is with children. The surgical and laboratory techniques are given in detail and nearly one third of the book is devoted to these and to the general principles of muscle pathology, including a brief user's manual called 'How to read a biopsy'. There is still no substitute for the author's two other related books *The Floppy Infant* and *Muscle Disorders in Childhood* where the emphasis is on clinical matters. But in every good muscle unit the clinicians take part in the muscle biopsy interpretation, and this book will help you to join them. If you think you haven't time you should not be doing muscle biopsies at all.

D GARDNER-MEDWIN

Handicapping Conditions in Children. Edited by W Gillham. Pp 120: £7.95 paperback. Croom Helm Ltd Publishers, 1985.

The aim of this book (edited and mainly written by a psychologist), described as the key book in the Croom Helm Special Education series, is to provide an overview of the commonest handicapping conditions. In that the book is intended to be read by a wide audience of professionals, parents, and students the aims are fulfilled admirably.

This is a lucidly written, short book (120 pages) and can be read easily from cover to cover. There are eight chapters covering: mental handicap, language disorders, deafness, visual handicap, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, spina bifida, and autism. For each disorder there is a balanced account of the medical, social, and educational issues. It is particularly strong on principles of remediation and educational provision. The explanations of the nature of the handicap in terms of how it affects the child's functioning in everyday life and how the handicap affects the family are excellent. The medical aspects are dealt with at a very basic but informative level, which parents in particular will find very useful.

This beautifully concise book can be strongly recommended to workers in the field of handicap, especially paramedical staff working in child development centres. Also I think it would be a useful introduction to handicap for medical students and paediatricians in training

S H ROUSSOUNIS

Iatrogenic Disorders of the Fetus, Infant and Child. Vol 2. Edited by E G Kassirer. Pp 500: DM 560 hardback. Springer-Verlag, 1985.

Most doctors would be forced to concede the truth of Oscar Wilde's aphorism that 'Experience is the name men give to their mistakes'. Certainly, the dramatic advances of recent years in the management of prematurity, malignant disease, and major malformations have not been achieved without a price.

This excellent book, the second of two volumes, sets out to catalogue the complications, failures of treatment, and residual problems associated with current surgical management. Its title, however, is rather misleading—suggesting a radiological textbook of limited appeal. In fact it is generously illustrated with numerous diagrams and photographs in addition to radiographs. Furthermore, its scope extends far beyond diagnostic radiology. Volume 1 has previously covered the complications of diagnostic and invasive radiology, neonatal and paediatric intensive care, and paediatric oncology. The newly published second volume is concerned largely with surgical problems.

The opening chapter, which deals with complications affecting the airway, thorax, and diaphragm, illustrates the relevance of the book to so many areas of current paediatric practice. The complications of endotracheal intubation (particularly subglottic stenosis) are considered in depth as are those of tracheostomy care and pleural drainage. Other topics include inhaled foreign bodies, bronchoscopy, oesophagoscopy, pulmonary resection, diaphragmatic hernia, and eventration of the diaphragm.

The second chapter, on cardiac surgery, emphasises the shift towards definitive correction of complex defects in the neonatal period or infancy. There are some excellent diagrams and radiographs of the standard cardiac operations. Surgery of the upper gastrointestinal tract, abdominal wall, liver, and biliary tract is then covered comprehensively in an 80 page chapter culminating in a list of no less than two hundred references. In this and subsequent chapters the authors provide us with a balanced review of the published work rather than didactic statements. Their interpretation of iatrogenic disease includes pitfalls of diagnosis in addition to the sequelae of medical intervention.

A chapter on colorectal surgery maintains the standard. Two chapters are devoted to the urinary tract, one of which