

Book reviews

Hypoglycaemia in infancy and childhood. (Series volume in 'Current reviews in paediatrics'). By A Aynsley-Green, G Soltész. Pp 165: £18.00 hardback. Churchill Livingstone, 1985.

Medical publishing houses have signalled the coming of age of British paediatrics and the viability of its specialised offspring. Recognising potential markets, they have responded by launching a series of books that attempt to package speciality expertise so as to be accessible to the general paediatrician. This slim monograph and its planned companions are in the vanguard of this activity. The editors have avoided the temptation of being overambitious and have selected a formula based on contemporary journal reviews or annotations. Hypoglycaemia is an appropriate topic for the first volume in this series; it is a subject in which Professor Aynsley-Green and Dr Soltész have considerable research and clinical experience, and it is an area of metabolism that has particular relevance to paediatrics.

The first chapter summarises current knowledge of the regulation of carbohydrate metabolism. The authors successfully blend information derived from studies of adult and childhood physiology and high-light points of clinical relevance. This introduction sets the scene for a systematic analysis of the causes of hypoglycaemia in infancy and childhood. Roughly a third of the book is devoted to hyperinsulinism, and a paediatrician suspecting this disorder could not do better than refer to this excellent review based on the authors' almost unparalleled personal series.

The coverage of the multitude of inborn errors of metabolism that may manifest themselves through hypoglycaemia is inevitably selective. The examples given emphasise critical steps in glycogenolysis and glyconeogenesis and also reflect the authors' devotion to unravelling metabolic pathways by detailed analyses of fasting metabolite profiles and tolerance tests. Even a disciple of this approach might wonder, however, why the metabolic profile of a patient with rare glycogen synthetase deficiency needs to be illustrated twice! Personally, I would have preferred more guidance on the place of white blood cell and fibroblast enzyme activity analysis. Given that appropriate screening investi-

gations have been performed, such analyses often avoid the need for prolonged and demanding studies on the child. Adequate staffing and financial support for the necessary United Kingdom supraregional enzyme biochemistry laboratories might well be a suitable topic for an annotation in this learned journal!

The busy clinician will welcome the final brief chapter that summarises a practical approach to the investigation and treatment of hypoglycaemia. This step by step strategy is illustrated by clear lists and flow diagrams. The entire text is well referenced, and young paediatricians contemplating research in the field of hypoglycaemia will come to regard it as essential reading.

D I JOHNSTON

'Cystic Fibrosis' Manual of Diagnosis and Management. By Goodchild and Dodge. Pp 212: £9.50 paperback. Ballière-Tindall, 1986.

The first edition of this book, published in 1976 and written by Professor Anderson and Dr Goodchild, was widely read and highly praised. There have been many advances in the last 10 years and this second edition will be welcomed. It has been substantially rewritten by Dr Goodchild and Professor Dodge and, although rather longer, the authors must be congratulated on producing a concise but very complete account of cystic fibrosis.

The format is similar to the first edition and includes a simple introductory chapter on the nature of cystic fibrosis, followed by a chapter on pathogenesis. The chapter on clinical and diagnostic features is excellent and describes in some detail the differing clinical characteristics through childhood, adolescence, and early adult life, emphasising the variable nature of this disease. The three chapters devoted to clinical management give a wealth of practical information, and controversial topics like antibiotic regimens are fully discussed. One chapter concentrates on social and family aspects, including management of the newly diagnosed child, and details a number of points that might seem obvious but are often forgotten. There is a short chapter on prognosis and scoring systems, followed by a longer chapter on laboratory investigations. Actual techniques are de-

scribed only in outline, but the importance of sweat testing, with its potential problems, the assessment of exocrine pancreatic function, neonatal screening, and the role of simple respiratory function tests are all covered. The final chapter on current research and the basic defect is understandable and the appendix lists the aims and objectives of the Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust, for whom this manual was prepared.

This small book is an excellent practical guide covering diagnosis and modern clinical management of cystic fibrosis. I would recommend it to all doctors and paramedical staff interested or involved in the care of patients with cystic fibrosis. Remember that many parents and older patients will also read it.

P H WELLER

Neonatal Anaesthesia and Perioperative Care. 2nd edition. (Current Topics in Anaesthesia Series.) By D Hatch, E Sumner. Pp 271: £33.00 hardback. Edward Arnold, 1986.

The 'Current Topics in Anaesthesia Series' of textbooks have been produced to meet a need defined by the general editors who state that 'ninety per cent of all the existing knowledge which can be drawn on for the practice of medicine is less than ten years old'. Thus keeping abreast of all the relevant published work is well nigh impossible. Hence the need for concise, up to date reviews written by experts in the field. This is the second edition of a book that was first published in 1981. It has been extensively rewritten and includes much new material. It has increased in size by 25% and, unfortunately, in price by considerably more than this.

The book will interest both anaesthetists in training preparing for examinations and established practitioners. Even those anaesthetists already heavily involved in paediatrics will find it worthy of study, for it is literally packed with useful up to date information. The sheer density of all this information, however, particularly in the basic science sections, does not make for easy reading. One must work hard to plough through it all and most readers will find it necessary to follow up the recommended references and further reading to really 'get to grips' with the subject. Nevertheless, the effort is well worth making.