

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.

Much of the advice about clinical management is based on current practice at the Hospital for Sick Children in London. Inevitably, some of the advice is dogmatic, but the dogma obviously works in the hands of the authors. Anaesthetists in training will be grateful for the clear guidelines set down but established anaesthetists will realise that alternative approaches are possible.

The book is well produced and I could not find evidence of misprinting or frank errors. Contradictions in a two author book should be few and indeed this is the case. (There does appear to be a conflict about whether the dead space/tidal volume ratio is different in the neonate than in the adult or older child).

Despite the increased price this book is nevertheless good value for money.

L G GARDNER

Growth disorders in infants, children and adolescents. By M L Rallison. Pp 476: £35.00 hardback. John Wiley and Sons, 1986.

This is a single author textbook on growth by Professor Rallison and obviously reflects a long period of clinical practice in paediatric growth and endocrinology consultation.

The chapters are organised in a sequential manner starting with chapters on the nature of growth followed by one on fetal growth and development. The next three chapters detail normal growth in infancy, childhood, and adolescence and are followed by a useful chapter with details of growth measurement, growth charts, a discussion on skeletal maturation, and finally prediction of mature height.

The remaining six chapters follow a similar pattern with a clinical approach to growth disorders likely to be met at different times in a child's life. The clinical approach is continued in the final two chapters in dealing with problems of failure to thrive, obesity, and the psychological problems associated with growth disorders in children.

In recent years there has been an increased interest in growth and emphasis given to its importance in assessing the wellbeing of a child. I think that this book does make a very useful contribution in this area and that it will appeal to many groups of medical and paramedical personnel.

The later chapters can be consulted for individual growth problems in childhood, and the earlier chapters should appeal to

the doctor seeking a more detailed understanding of the principles underlying growth. The book is well referenced and reasonably up to date—for example, mentioning the problems with growth hormone treatment in 1985 that led to the withdrawal of pituitary derived growth hormone.

The book contains some of the minor irritations often seen in books from North America. These include non-use of SI units, the use of unusual drug names and initials for studies such as CBC UA, and chemistry panel. In addition, the various tables in the appendix will not be used greatly in this country, but perhaps the appendix could have included some information on the SI equivalents for the various units noted in the text.

Despite these minor criticisms, I feel sure that the book will find a useful place in many libraries, but other similar publications from this country would probably be bought in preference by individuals.

C S SMITH

Causation of Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Children: Perspectives on Cardiovascular Risk in Early Life. Edited by G S Berenson. Pp 428: \$76.50 hardback.

This book, based on the Bogalusa study, provides essential information for a debate on the issue of vascular disease prevention in early life. Topics include the evolution of risk factors in early life, the evidence for atherosclerotic disease in children and young adults and the relation of these to risk factors, tracking of cardiovascular disease risk factors in school age children, the inter-relations of coronary artery disease risk factors, biological determinants of serum lipoprotein concentrations, carbohydrate metabolism, the determinants of blood pressure in children, body composition, particularly obesity, and a chapter on behaviour and its relation to cardiovascular disease risk. The role of diet and genetic factors determining the occurrence of coronary artery disease is discussed. It emerges that when two population groups are compared environmental factors seem paramount, but when studies are made on intrapopulation differences the environment factor seems very much smaller, thus indicating that given a particular level of environmental variation it is genetic factors that seem to determine which individuals will suffer.

Despite the extensive work at Bogalusa

and elsewhere, the controversy as to whether irreversible arteriosclerosis begins in childhood or whether restriction of fats in the diets of young children will have any appreciable effect on later prevalence of arteriosclerosis remains unresolved. It is, for example, still unclear whether the fatty streaking that begins about the age of 10 years inevitably gives rise to fibrous plaques during early adult life.

Perhaps the most salutary single statement comes in Plate One, where the coronary arteries of a 23 year old, who died in an automobile accident, are shown with considerable atherosclerosis. He had been a member of the Bogalusa heart study and all the usual determinants of coronary artery disease were normal. In high school he had become a persistent smoker of (Marlboro) cigarettes.

These are the sort of plums that can be pulled out of the pudding created by sentences such as 'clinical and laboratory markers ultimately provide significant links to pathological changes in the cardiovascular system associated with overt disease.'

This is a densely written book containing much detailed discussion most likely to be of interest to the epidemiologist, clinical nutritionist, paediatrician with a special interest in nutrition and preventive medicine, and cardiologists. It should certainly be in all serious paediatric libraries.

L S MITZ

Chronically ill children with their families. By N Hobbs, J M Perrin, H T Treys. Pp 406: £34.00 hardback. Jossey-Bass, 1986.

Between 1980 and 1985, this team from Vanderbilt University coordinated discussion and review of the public policies affecting chronically ill children throughout the United States. The detailed findings are published separately, allowing this book, subtitled, 'problems, prospects, and proposals from the Vanderbilt study' to offer an overview of the issues involved.

This book is written for all concerned with the welfare of chronically ill children. The 12 chapters present a comprehensive analysis of the epidemiology of chronic illness, and its reciprocal effects on children, families, and communities, in social, educational, and moral terms. After discussing various options the book concludes with a call to strengthen community resources, reverse the trend towards centralised medical care, and increase public funding to provide essential paramedical

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