

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 plaque 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

services and health insurance for the large proportion of families currently without cover.

While the early chapters are poignantly illustrated by quotations from patients and children, the latter part of the book lacks the tables and diagrams necessary to clarify the points made. The language is deliberately non-technical but assumes familiarity with American health and educational systems. Much of the book's impact is lost by the repetitive and unnecessarily convoluted text.

This is not a reference book, but by defining the diverse problems common to those with chronic illnesses it provides useful guidance for planners and policy makers, emphasising the importance of coordinating available resources. The detailed discussions concerning finance and policy options have little bearing, however, on the organisation of child health services in the United Kingdom, and those practising here will find recent British publications more relevant.

HILARY SMITH

**Neurological Examination of the Newborn—A Routine for All.** By N O'Doherty. Pp 204: £29.95 hardback. MTP Press, 1986.

Neil O'Doherty states that the outstanding feature of the neonatal neurological examination is its virtual total absence from the nursery. An Irish paediatric surgeon in England believes the same about the rectal examination. How passionately the Irish argue for their beliefs. O'Doherty argues in his book that the neurological examination of the newborn is not an academic exercise for obsessive people with all the time in the world but can be a rewarding and practical procedure. The

case is made in three chapters: 'the baby's latent abilities', 'the examination' and 'the outcome'. By the end of the book the author recommends the selection of a group of babies identified by examination, perinatal events, and adverse social factors, which forms a group at risk of 'neurological dysfunction' (roughly 10% of all newborns). In designated clinics this group can be followed up and intervention such as physiotherapy or genetic counselling applied. Dr O'Doherty anticipates the criticisms of the too busy and the sceptics and counters them with succinct statements of defence.

The real value of the book is not whether his plea for neurology succeeds or fails. I fear it may fail with the trend for 48 hour or even six hour discharges from the hospital. The concept of a nursery full of babies awaiting the neurological screening procedure with its two sides of A4 check list is becoming a thing of the past. Nevertheless, what can be achieved is described in the book in the minimum of script intermingled with numerous helpful and amusing black and white photographs. I don't think I have seen better illustrated (apart from a video) the potential of a good neurological examination—for example, the grasp reflex helping swallowing—a clinical application of neonatal physiology.

The style of the book is highly personal. There are only the very standard references of Andre-Thomas, Brazelton, and Prechtl, but, for some reason, no Dubowitz. The pathology of neurological dysfunction reflects the author's own wide experience with a strange obsession for incontinencia pigmenti.

The book will find its place between the complex tomes on the neurological examination and the simple guides to the senior house officer. It should appeal to the

wide variety of personnel who care for the newborn.

J G BISSENDEN

**The Y Chromosome. Part A: Basic Characteristics of the Y Chromosome.** Pp 608: £103.00 hardback. **Part B: Clinical Aspects of Y Chromosome Abnormalities.** Pp 420: £75.00 hardback. Volume 6 in 'Progress and Topics in Cytogenetics'. Edited by A A Sandberg. Alan R Liss, 1985.

This multi-author two volume set is a comprehensive review on cytogenetic, cellular, molecular, physiological, and clinical aspects of the Y chromosome. The chapters in Part A will be of more interest to persons with cytogenetic leanings while Part B will be more relevant to those with a clinical bias. In particular, chapter 20 in Part A on 'The Y Chromosome in the Female Phenotype' has a useful, succinct review of the approach to, and classification of, intersex in humans, and chapter 18 in Part B on 'The Clinical Aspects of the XYY Syndrome' provides up to date information on a difficult area in genetic counselling.

The text as a whole suffers from a fault common to many multi-author texts—that of repetition of material. This is particularly true of the introduction and discussion sections in the chapters on the various aspects of the H-Y antigen and those on the recent studies involving the isolation and characterisation of Y chromosome specific deoxyribonucleic acid sequences. The text complements a previous volume in the same series on the X chromosome. The two volume set is one for the general reader to 'dip into' rather than 'read from cover to cover'.

R F MUELLER