

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