Book reviews

Craniosynostosis. Diagnosis, Evaluation and Management. Edited by M M Cohen Jr. Pp 606: \$148.50 hardback. Raven Press, 1986.

The craniosynostoses are not common conditions but as plastic surgeons, neurosurgeons, and others get together to form craniofacial teams more cases are being seen who might not otherwise have been considered candidates for surgical treatment for either cosmetic reasons alone or to avert neurodevelopmental problems due to cerebral compression.

This book achieves a remarkable balance, not only providing an excellent and comprehensible overview of the subject but also by going into certain technical areas (surgery and genetics, for example) in such depth that even an expert will have much to learn. This must be due in great measure to the skill of the editor, Professor M Michael Cohen Jr. Already well known in neurosurgical circles for his articles on the genetic syndromes associated with craniosynostosis, here he provides almost half the text himself, while the remainder is entrusted to a highly selected and prestigious group of contributors. Among these I would pick out Ronald J Lemire (Embryology), Thomas P Naidich (Radiology), John A Jane (Neurosurgical treatment), and, the doyen of craniofacial surgeons, Paul Tessier. But this list should not lead one to assume that the other chapters are not of a high calibre and I would select Sven Kreiborg on the 'post natal growth and development of the craniofacial complex in premature craniosynostosis' as an excellent review of this thorny subject, where the possibility that early surgical intervention to the skull base sutures will allow the face to grow forwards normally in the future is still hotly debated. Dr Kreiborg's view (and I would agree with him here) is that the growth of the facial structures is more dependent on the patient's syndrome and the primary impairment of facial growth that implies than to any restriction placed on it by the prematurely fused sutures of the skull base and vault.

Overall, I would call this a model textbook. The production with regard to its photographs and drawings is excellent. Where knowledge is scanty and opinions count for more than facts its views are

moderate. Yet where order must be imposed on areas of chaos (as in Professor Cohen's dealings with the syndrome hunters) it has the ring of true authority.

RICHARD HAYWARD

Clinical Paediatric Nephrology. Edited by R J Postlethwaite. Pp 495: £35.00 hardback. Wright, 1986.

This is a first rate, comprehensive textbook that covers the whole range of renal medicine and includes three useful chapters on urological problems. There are nearly 40 authors, well known for their contributions to paediatric nephrology, from both sides of the Atlantic.

Separate chapters are devoted to major presenting symptom complexes and signs—namely hypertension, haematuria, proteinuria, oedema, enlarged kidneys, wetting, and infection. These guide us logically through causes, investigations, and management. Glomerulonephritis is well covered, and management of acute and chronic renal failure is described in detail. There are two excellent chapters on those difficult subjects, renal tubular disorders and cystic disease, written from the clinical point of view.

Discussion of urinary tract infection includes the clinical features at different ages, methods of urine collection, and the importance of symptomatic and asymptomatic bacteriuria. Investigations and management are described fully, but not all paediatricians would agree with the recommendation that invasive investigations, intravenous urography and micturating cystourethrography, be performed in all children under 5 after the first infection. Ultrasound examination, which is completely painless and almost as informative, is now an acceptable alternative, as mentioned in a later section of the book.

The difficult problem of treating the neuropathic bladder, and numerous abnormalities that require the attention of the paediatric urologist, are described lucidly, management being summed up by the adage, 'All you can do is kill the germs and fix the plumbing'. An excellent review, liberally illustrated, of imaging techniques together with chapters on growth, bone

disease, homeostasis, and investigation of renal function complete the contents.

The book is clearly written and the illustrations are excellent. The numerous references are completely up to date, some as recent as 1986, and the price is modest. It will serve as both a guide to generalists and a reference text for specialists. I strongly recommend it.

MARTIN MONCRIEFF

Childhood Epidemiology. *Br Med Bull* 1986 42 (2). Edited by E D Alberman and C A Peckham. Pp 219: £16.00 softback. Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

The authors' stated aim is to show how recent developments in childhood epidemiology have grown out of an awareness that epidemiological studies in childhood must relate to genetic and environmental factors that influence growth and development as well as to the natural history of disease. The authors achieve their aim but they also provide a very valuable, tightly packed mass of information about the aetiology and distribution of the whole range of disease in childhood. The chapter on infections is a model of simplicity and clarity. Unfortunately, not all of the subjects lend themselves to a similar approach, and although the information is always there, the reader sometimes has to hunt to find the message.

About half of the contributions are concerned with aspects of growth and development. As well as excellent accounts of problems of hearing and vision these provide a very useful discussion of patterns of morbidity and mortality at all ages of childhood and include an important section on special and intensive care for neonates. The chapters on physical and on behavioural and intellectual development provide useful critical discussion of methods as well as the usual facts. This part of the book, together with the chapters concerned with the effects of environment and with prevention, should be required reading not only for community paediatricians but for politicians, general managers, and all who have responsibility for the allocation of resources.

The remaining chapters provide lucid accounts of the aetiology of respiratory diseases, hypertension, disorders of the gastrointestinal tract, and the urogenital, endocrine, haemopoietic, and musculoskeletal systems. Their contents will be of great interest and value to the general paediatrician and to all those who are preparing for higher examinations, but one suspects that the contents of each individual chapter will already be familiar to the appropriate sub- or supraspecialist who has kept up with his subject.

This is a book that contains something for everybody and a copy should be available in every departmental library.

J A YOUNG

Pädiatrische Differentialdiagnose: 2. überarbeitete Auflage. By V M Hertl. Pp 661: DM 248 hardback. George Thieme, 1986.

The differential diagnosis of diseases in childhood is usually discussed briefly under individual headings in most paediatric textbooks large and small. There are also a few books popular with those preparing for examinations that list signs and symptoms. Some 'paediatric case studies' usually complete the collection of texts on general paediatrics in any medical bookshop or library. This 660 page hardback, however, is different as it discusses the phenomena of diseases rather than the nosology and the author would, therefore, like to see it used in conjunction with a standard textbook.

Signs and symptoms are discussed (but often only defined or listed) in six sections. There are all the obvious chapters on pain, dyspnoea, impaired consciousness, abnormal gait, stridor, vomiting, abnormal bowel motions, and 13 chapters on various body regions from intradermal and subdermal signs to bone and joint disorders. There is notable emphasis on psychosomatic and psychiatric symptoms, including sleep disorders, vertigo, lethargy and depression, restlessness, learning difficulties, behaviour disorders, autism, and homosexuality. There are brief chapters on age related problems, life threatening situations, and an appendix with tables and normal values, as well as a very detailed index.

Having used this book for several weeks now I am not sure how much it has helped me in the differential diagnosis of common or rare diseases. I found the approach often too theoretical and sometimes old fashioned. There are, for instance, 18

pages on heart diseases, although if faced with a cyanotic newborn the non-specialist would have great difficulties in finding advice about how to arrive at a provisional diagnosis. There are a few gaps and omissions. For instance, phonocardiographic findings are discussed but cardiac ultrasound is not mentioned. Child abuse is not covered adequately and I could not find the German equivalent of 'toddlers' diarrhoea' in the section on chronic diarrhoea.

Who is this book aimed at? It is of limited use to the more experienced paediatrician, although he might like to use some of the excellent graphs and high quality pictures for teaching purposes; the medical student would presumably be overwhelmed by both the wealth of the information and the price of the book. It is probably the junior doctor and general practitioner with a special interest in paediatrics who may enjoy reading it most. For an English translation to be successful this, in many ways excellent, book would have to be shorter, more practical in its approach, more up to date in some aspects, and cheaper to purchase.

MARTIN BECKER

Advances in Pediatric Infectious Diseases. Vol 1. Edited by S C Aronoff, W T Hughes, S Kohl, W T Speck, E R Wald. Pp 192: £24.00 hardback. Year Book Medical Publishers, 1986.

This is the first in a series intended to provide concise and complete reviews in a rapidly advancing field of paediatrics. The aim is to give information useful to the clinician in his daily work and to couple this with extensive reference for those who wish to delve further.

By virtue of its position as volume 1, it is perhaps unfair to direct criticism at its content. There is, for example, a very pedestrian account of an old subject, infectious diarrhoea, a chapter that falls into the trap of trying to be all inclusive and succeeds only in saying a little about a lot, and yet nothing on paediatric human immunodeficiency virus infection. Indeed, many of the chapters are more a review of their subject, past and present, than a tightly written account of 'advances' in its treatment or in our understanding of it. It is perhaps significant that the cover title is so designed that 'Advances in . . .' recedes in white and 'Pediatric Infectious Diseases' stands out in gold!

There is, none the less, a very interesting and lucid account of Lyme disease and

Epstein-Barr virus infection, a logical approach to the often met problems of bacteraemia in the febrile child, and discussion of varicella zoster infections in their various settings. Other disparate areas covered include shunt catheter infections, cytomegalovirus in the neonate and infant, group A streptococcal pharyngitis, and rapid viral diagnostic techniques. The latter chapter would not unfortunately leave most readers with a clear understanding of the various techniques available, perhaps because it assumes a large degree of basic laboratory knowledge and gives too cursory a summary.

In conclusion, this is a useful book but suffers from the problems of a multi-author text in having varying standards in different chapters. None the less, for libraries intent on collecting the series, it is a worthwhile first entry. As a one off buy I would look elsewhere to spend £24.00.

S P CONWAY

Recent advances in epilepsy. No 3. Edited by T A Pedley and B S Meldrum. Pp 315: £38.00 hardback. Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

This is the third volume in a series conceived as a cumulative textbook representing the state of the art in the field of epilepsy. The previous volumes had much to interest paediatricians, and the present one is no exception. Of the 14 reviews, three are exclusively concerned with children—namely, those on the benign focal epilepsies (Lerman and Kivity), non-convulsive status epilepticus (Stores), and the Aicardi syndrome (Chevrie and Aicardi). There is a concise critique of the genetics of epilepsy (Hauser and Anderson), including an appendix of 140 genetic syndromes with McKusick numbers, and a more detailed look at the progressive myoclonus epilepsies (Berkovic and Andermann). Chapters on sleep and epilepsy (Baldy-Moulinier) and ambulatory electroencephalographic (EEG) monitoring (Ebersole and Bridgers) define indications for all night polygraphy and cassette recording. The value of precise clinical descriptions, videorecording, and specialised EEG investigations are emphasised in two reviews that clearly distinguish complex partial seizures of temporal lobe (hippocampal-amygdalar) origin (Wieser) and frontal lobe origin (Quesney). Aspects of treatment covered in this volume include a summary of toxic effects (Schmidt) and updates on barbiturates (Prichard and