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


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


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 bacteremia 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


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 Aircardi syndrome (Chevrie and Airardi). 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 (Badly-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 (Quescne). Aspects of treatment covered in this volume include a summary of toxic effects (Schmidt) and updates on barbiturates (Prichard and