

Book reviews

Harries' Paediatric Gastroenterology. 2nd ed. Edited by P J Milla and D P R Muller. Pp 601: £50 hardback. Churchill Livingstone, 1988. ISBN 0-443-03058-8.

John Harries is described by his colleagues, the editors of this second edition, as 'a remarkable man who . . . showed us that clinical practice combined with laboratory research could be stimulating, rewarding and above all, fun'. All of us who ever worked with him can only agree and this book echoes those qualities.

It has been greatly expanded and now includes among its contributors several distinguished transatlantic gastroenterologists. The first of its four sections deals with basic science and investigatory techniques; the second and third contain a series of individual contributions on particular clinical problems involving the alimentary tract and liver; the final part deals with oral and parenteral nutrition. The editors claim it is primarily written with general paediatricians in mind. Their objective is fulfilled in so far as it provides comprehensive coverage and thorough bibliographies of the subjects dealt with. Individual references are as recent as 1987. Those of us who deal only occasionally with patients suffering from chronic inflammatory bowel disease or chronic liver disease, for example, can use this work to tap the brains respectively of Richard Grand and Ian Booth and of Alex Mowat.

Alan Lucas provides an excellent update on gut hormones and adaptation to extra-uterine nutrition. Common conditions are not ignored with chapters on surgical emergencies, irritable bowel syndrome, and acute and protracted diarrhoea.

If there is any caveat, it is that the rigid nature of any system specialty means that diseases which cross systems may be dealt with less thoroughly. Ill defined conditions, such as food intolerance, which have not yet landed themselves squarely in any particular specialty, are dealt with rather nervously by a number of contributors. It is likely still to be in fashion by the third edition so let's hope it merits its own chapter. As with all multi-author works, some chapters are more analytic than others. For example, the possible relationship of anal fissure and child sex abuse is mentioned in a single sentence referring to

Hobbs and Wynne's work but without any discussion.

This is a first rate book. It deserves a place in every paediatric ward library just as John Harries deserves a place in our hearts.

H MARCOVITCH
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
*Horton General Hospital,
Banbury, Oxfordshire*

Paediatric Gastroenterology. 2nd ed. Edited by C M Anderson, V Burke, and M Gracey. Pp 917: £95 hardback. Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1987. ISBN 0-867-93176.

This is the largest of three new editions of paediatric gastroenterology textbooks published in 1987. Like its first edition 13 years ago *Paediatric Gastroenterology* by Anderson, Burke, and Gracey, aims to be a comprehensive reference text dealing with normal and abnormal function of the child's gastrointestinal tract. Its 18 contributors are senior figures in paediatric gastroenterology, able to give illuminating historical introductions to their sections and to write from large and long personal experience. Carre's description of hiatus hernia, for example, includes a study of 710 children, 80 for more than 30 years.

Chapters on the oropharynx, oesophagus, and stomach (Carre, Dodge) thoroughly review their physiology and disorders. A valuable chapter on endoscopy will require an additional section on endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography in future editions. There is an excellent review of small bowel physiology, with leading authorities (Walker, Burke, Auricchio, Brueton, Gracey) discussing development, digestion, brush border enzymes, immunology, and microflora, respectively. Infective diarrhoea and gut infection and parasitisation (Gracey, Burke, Grove, Keusch) are rightly given prominence. Professor Anderson writes with authority upon the approach to the child with abnormal stools, and on coeliac disease, cystic fibrosis, and inflammatory bowel disease. Chapters on the radiology of the gut (Astley, Gates) and on the pancreas (Hadorn, Munch) were particularly good.

Inevitably the critical reviewer can find some omissions, such as the role of pH studies and of cisapride in gastro-oesophageal reflux, and some topical areas which merit fuller discussion, such as the use of rice powder in rehydration solutions and of elemental diets in the treatment of Crohn's disease. The description (and picture) of a baby chair for postural treatment of reflux rather than the prone position will irritate some oesophagologists. Books on the gut traditionally include a section on the liver (although the converse is not true) so setting the contributor the impossible task of providing a comprehensive review of a major specialty in one chapter.

Despite these quibbles, this is an invaluable reference book for the practising paediatrician faced with a gastroenterological problem, and its value is enhanced by its thorough and recent literature citations and by excellent illustrations. It is undoubtedly an essential medical library purchase. I hope the third edition will be less tardy.

M S TANNER
SENIOR LECTURER IN CHILD HEALTH
University of Leicester

Child Sexual Abuse Within the Family: Assessment and Treatment. Edited by A Bentovim. Pp 319: £19.50 softback. Butterworth Scientific, 1988. ISBN 7236-0634-X.

A timely book on an unspeakable and hidden problem, which helps to break the taboo that sex abuse must not be talked about. There is an extremely good opening chapter on definitions and normal sexual behaviour both in children and adults. I found the chapter on family functioning complicated and also naive, with little recognition of the fact that perpetrators by and large suffer from a compulsive behaviour disorder; an addiction, and go on abusing until they cannot get away with it. Many really prefer sex with children.

The chapter on recognition and assessment was good apart from the medical section, which I thought rather overlooked the holistic assessment (emotional behaviour, developmental as well as the general and specific physical forensic