

Book reviews

Cystic Fibrosis: the Facts. By Ann Harris and Maurice Super. Pp 133: £8.50 hardback. Oxford University Press, 1987. ISBN 0-19-261462-2.

This book is one of a series on medical topics published by Oxford University Press. It is a compact book of modest price intended for the non-medical reader who wishes to know more about cystic fibrosis.

The book attempts to explain the genetics, pathophysiology, bacteriology, and clinical feature in terms comprehensible to the layman. This is an ambitious task and non-medical staff who have read it find it heavy going. Because the book concentrates on facts rather than controversies current debates on antibiotic regimes are glossed over and newer ideas on nutrition receive only brief mention. The authors' interest in the genetics comes across well in the longest chapters dealing with these exciting developments.

This is not an easy book for parents but can be strongly recommended for non-medical members of the cystic fibrosis team.

J J COGSWELL

Children's Health and Well-being in the Nordic Countries. By Lennart Kohler and Gunborg Jakobsson. Pp 148: £12.00 hardback. Mackeith Press, 1987.

The Nordic countries have, for many years, headed the international league table of indices of the health of children—for example, perinatal, infant, and childhood mortality rates and the proportion of infants of low birth weight. This book provides an excellent review, not only of these hard indices but also of the softer indices of morbidity.

The introductory chapters set the scene with a wide ranging coverage of relevant information such as demographic change, expenditure on health services and on social services, employment, and the levels of health service provision. Wherever possible comparative data for the three monarchies (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) and the two republics (Finland and Iceland) are given.

As expected, most of the routinely collected sources of data are covered. They

include mortality statistics, cancer and congenital malformation registration, and hospital bed use. The last of these has always shown that a hospital bed which is available will be filled. I learnt that this has been translated into the third law of thermodynamics—that is, that a hospital bed must be kept warm. One surprising omission of what, presumably, is routinely collected, is data on immunisation rates, perhaps because deficiency in immunisation uptake is not a problem of the Nordic countries.

The variety of information provided from special surveys, which range from chronic disability and handicap through drug use in children to interviews and questionnaire data on children's health, is valuable. Inevitably, intercountry comparisons are fraught with difficulty because of differences in definition and methods of data collection. Among the survey data it is disappointing that there is nothing on breast feeding.

The authors carefully define the terms impairment, disability, and handicap but then confine themselves to using only the term handicap when often disability is more appropriate. This is a minor criticism, however, as the book in general is a most valuable source of comparative data.

P O D PHAROAH

Occupational Therapy for Children with Disabilities. By Dorothy E Penso. Pp 181: £8.95 paperback. Croom Helm, 1987. ISBN 0-7099-4049-1.

This is a volume in the *Therapy in Practice* series edited by Jo Campling. The author comments that this book attempts to look deeper and beyond individual impairments to the basic approach of the occupational therapist to the child with disabilities and his family. In this the author has been successful. In general terms the text is somewhat pedantic, but where there are detailed case histories the sequence of history taking, assessment, and case management is clearly set out. The need for evaluation is not forgotten. It is a pity that in this exciting era of microtechnology the reference to the compensation for motor problems by custom designed

switches should have been limited to one paragraph in chapter 3.

The illustrations are few and lack imagination, especially when compared with those of Nancie Finnie's superb book *Handling the Cerebral Palsied Child at Home*.

With the increasing integration of children with disabilities and the trend towards multidisciplinary training, those caring for children are well informed and ready to be partners with the therapist.

While recommending this book as an introduction to occupational therapy for children who are disabled, I strongly recommend that those who are interested should follow up references in the text to gain a comprehensive picture of the wealth of expertise that is available.

R M POWELL

Haematology of Infancy and Childhood. By D G Nathan and F A Oski. (2 Volumes) ed. Pp 1680; £55 hardback. Saunders Publications, 1987.

A review of this tome is a herculean task and the true assessment of its worth must await the test of time on our bookshelves as the standard reference. It might appear sacrilegious to criticise the 'bible' of our field of work but there are a few comments worth making. The weight is considerably greater than Gideon's equivalent and it could usefully be reduced by omission of the section on disorders of bilirubin metabolism and non-haematological malignancies, which the authors present excellently elsewhere. The colour plates are not well reproduced and do not add a lot to the book. I would have preferred to see a more extensive review of immunophenotyping in leukaemia, especially acute myeloblastic leukaemia where diagnosis—for example of megakaryoblastic variants—would not be helped by the information presented. I was also very disappointed to see a persistence of the old canard about fetal haemoglobin always being raised in Diamond-Blackfan anaemia. In an otherwise excellent section the true heterogeneity of the disorder and difficulty in distinction from transient erythroid aplasia is again glossed over.

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