

Arch Dis Child: first published as 001136 and 035257 on 11 May 1988. Downloaded from <http://adc.bmj.com/> by Stockholm University on 07/20/2016. Protected by copyright.

## 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.

The new edition is outstanding value for money being much cheaper than smaller and less useful texts. The reference lists are remarkably up to date and I thoroughly enjoyed the new information on molecular biology. In addition there were very few typographical errors and the layout of the book is very good. No paediatric haematology department will be complete without it and it remains the standard text for haematologists and others who manage children with blood disease.

I M HANN

**Antimicrobial Therapy in Infants and Children.** Edited by Gideon Koren, Charles G Prober, and Ronald Gold. Pp 819: hardback (price not stated). Marcel Dekker, 1988. ISBN 0-8247-7745-X.

This is volume 4 of '*Clinical Pediatrics*', a series edited by Fima Lifshitz of Cornell University and designed to provide '... an excellent data base for physicians ... to aid them in their clinical practice ...'. The remit to provide a data base has certainly been fulfilled. The book is an encyclopaedic resource for almost everything known about antimicrobial drugs, and it provides authoritative well referenced guidelines for their use, drug by drug, in infancy and childhood.

Where I feel that the book fails seriously is in its second declared aim. The layout of the book is by drug: chapter 17, macrolide antibiotics; chapter 18, the lincosamides, rather than by condition—for example, meningitis—and it is not at all easy to extract disease oriented information. This identifies the major failing in my eyes, the index, which is frankly inadequate to deal with clinical issues. For example, to retrieve information on the use of antimicrobial prophylaxis in the family of a child with meningitis caused by *Haemophilus influenzae*, you might look up the organism

in the index: all you find is an arcane reference to the antimicrobial activities of pefloxacin, amifloxacin, enoxacin, and norfloxacin. Still game, you look up meningitis: the single reference now is to a table suggesting the empirical selection of ampicillin and tobramycin as first choice therapy for neonatal meningitis, and ampicillin and chloramphenicol for older children. Prophylaxis—a bit desperate, this—raises no reference at all. If you already knew that rifampicin was the drug to consider, then in the rifampicin chapter you would find the information—a short, referenced section on the prophylaxis of *H influenzae* contacts, cross referenced to elsewhere in the text for dosage recommendations.

My colleagues in the hospital pharmacy like this book for its compendious nature and its emphasis on pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics. They'll get my copy, and perhaps hospital pharmacies in general might consider buying it, but I cannot recommend it for the practising paediatrician.

J S KROLL

**Oncology and Immunology of Down Syndrome.** Edited by Ernest E McCoy and Charles J Epstein. Pp 242: hardback (price not stated). Alan R Liss, 1987. ISBN 0-8451-5096-0.

People with Down's syndrome have an increased risk of infection, particularly respiratory infection, and an increased risk of developing acute leukaemia. Scientists are only just beginning to realise the potential of children and adults with trisomy 21 to teach us about resistance to infection and aspects of oncology. The Epsteins, Lois and Charles, have been at the forefront of recent advances, showing by studies on trisomic fibroblasts that the genes coding for the receptors for inter-

ferons  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are on chromosome 21. Furthermore an oncogene has recently been localised to 21q22, raising important but unanswered questions about oncogenesis.

This book constitutes the proceedings of the annual United States National Down Syndrome Society symposium held in December 1986. As such it suffers from the usual problems of published proceedings with papers in different typesettings of variable quality, considerable overlap of content, and variable quality of papers. There is an excellent short introduction on the molecular biology of chromosome 21. The rest of the book is divided into separate sections on oncology and immunology. It is evident from both sections that there are too few scientists working in either field to fill a book. The oncology section veers off into a chapter on chromosomal translocations in B cell derived tumours of only peripheral relevance to Down's syndrome, and another chapter on lineage establishment in haemopoiesis that was interesting but obscure. In the immunology section the emphasis drifts from specific immune defects in subjects with Down's syndrome to more recherché aspects of interferon. On the credit side there is a fine chapter by the Epsteins and Jon Weil describing the mouse model trisomy 16.

This book is an indictment of how we have neglected children with Down's syndrome, know far too little about the epidemiology or aetiology of their infections, and have thus been slow to learn important lessons from this 'experiment of nature.' I suspect it will have a very limited readership and I would certainly not recommend it as a book to be purchased for clinics dealing in practical aspects of managing children with Down's syndrome. I hope though that those interested in basic science will read and take note.

D ISAACS