Book reviews

Language Development and Disorders. Edited by William Yule and Michael Rutter. Pp 482: £28.00 hardback. Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1987. ISBN 0-632-01522-5.

This major work on all aspects of speech and language disorders has been long awaited and much needed. With 472 pages of text, and very full and up to date reference lists to each chapter, it will be essential to workers in many disciplines who have a special interest in language development and its problems—including those in psychology, speech therapy, paediatrics, and special education. At £28 it is very good value (as I can conscientiously say having bought my own copy before receiving one for review).

There are 31 contributors to the 29 chapters. They cover the classification, prevalence, and causes of language disorders; the nature and mechanisms of language development from the pre-linguistic stage, including its neurobiology and the effects of the environment; and the relation of language and psychiatric disorders. Also included are the particular language problems associated with impaired vision, hearing, and intelligence; assessment; and intervention including the use of sign language and microcomputer technology.

The style and standard of the chapters varies. The five to which Rutter contributes are predictably good, and models of clarity. They state clearly some of the questions one is most often asked (for example, Do nurseries help? What sort of parental talk helps children's language most? What about bilingual homes?), review the evidence concisely and give the answer if there is one. Other excellent chapters are those by Bishop and Rosenbloom (classification), Fletcher (language development), Freeman and Blockberger (deaf and blind children's language), Yule and Bax (assessment), and Kiernan (non-vocal communication systems).

The main fault of the book is that it is too long, if it is regarded as a book rather than a series of connected essays. The dutiful reader who studies it from cover to cover will have forgotten the beginning before he reaches the end. There is a lot of duplication. Specific developmental language disorders, the effect of glue ear, and the Landau-

Kleffner syndrome are among the many topics covered more than once. Furthermore, the same evidence is sometimes used, without editorial comment, in different chapters to reach different conclusions. Concerning the effects of horrifically extreme deprivation, Puckering and Rutter review nine cases, and conclude that there is probably no critical period for language development in early childhood. In the next chapter, Goodman addresses the same issue, and referring to one of these cases ('Genie') reaches an opposite conclusion.

Then, on the question of whether the characteristic features of baby talk ('motherese') are important in helping normal children's language development, Wells and Gutfreund suggest they are, whereas Puckering and Rutter appear to dismiss their importance at one point, but then take a different view at another. Again, on the prevalence and time course of language delay, Bishop and Rosenbloom say that the prevalence falls steeply between ages 3 and 5—which sounds reasonable. However they cite Silva's Dunedin study as evidence for this. It is therefore puzzling in Silva's own useful chapter to see a Venn diagram showing that in a sample of 857 children followed longitudinally, 37 had language delay at age 3, and 48 had it at 5 (though these only included 20 out of the 37 delayed at 3). The explanation must be that Silva's definitions were based on the 5th centile, so the number of children regarded as delayed at any age must be roughly the same.

The editors could have omitted some chapters altogether, thus avoiding duplication, and they could profitably have added editorial footnotes explaining some of the apparent contradictions. Nevertheless, they and their contributors have produced an indispensable volume. It is interesting to compare it with the much slimmer volume in the same series on *The child with delayed speech*, published in 1972, and to see the great increase both in interest and in knowledge of this topic over the past 15 years.

R J ROBINSON

Road Accident Statistics. By T P Hutchinson. Pp 292: £28 hardback. Rumsby Scientific Publishing, 1987. (Available only from

the publishers at PO Box 76, Rundle Mall, Adelaide, South Australia 5000.) ISBN 0-7316-0653-1.

From the slightly racy style of writing, with a free use of the first person singular, it would almost seem as if the author is hoping that this tome will be read from cover to cover. It is, however, a compendium of information collected from all over the world on road traffic statistics, their methods of collection, their accuracy, and the differences between police and health statistics. The author's obsession with every detail is to be commended in many ways, but for a paediatrician looking for simple information on the situation in the United Kingdom, it would be just as easy to find it in *Road Accidents: Great Britain* published annually by the Department of Transport. This book is much more a source of information for specialists groups.

R H JACKSON

Paediatric Hip Disorders. By G C Benet. Pp 273: £44.50 hardback. Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1987. ISBN 0-722-01509-8.

This relatively slim volume covers the whole range of disorders of the hip in children. There are 11 chapters and eight different contributors all from teaching centres in the United Kingdom, except for a solitary Australian, I P Torode from Melbourne. The editor contributes two chapters by himself. After introductory sections on the development of the hip and the paediatric consultation, major problems such as congenital anomalies of the femur, congenital dislocation of the hip, the Perthes hip, and the infected hip are discussed. The longest chapter in the book is a comprehensive account of congenital dislocation of the hip from infancy to adolescence by Martin McNicol of Edinburgh. Perthes's disease is described by Anthony Catterall, who is an acclaimed authority on the subject. He makes the point that in a disease in which 60% of patients do well without treatment it is important to have factors in prognosis to clearly define the 40% for whom treatment is required. He advises operative containment of the femoral head at risk or for those children

who present late and have persistent pain. Trauma and tumours are included in the text.

Overall the book is well presented with good illustrations and useful references. It will be read by orthopaedic surgeons in training and indeed by consultants who do not have large children's practices. All the contributors are orthopaedic surgeons and a more rounded picture could have been achieved if there had been one chapter by a rheumatologist with paediatric expertise as there are a number of occasions where a medical opinion is invaluable. Overall the editor is to be congratulated.

L. KLENERMAN

Child Health Clinics. By Margaret Barker and Jonathan Ferrier. Pp 120: £9.50 paperback. John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 1988. ISBN 0-471-91626-9.

This book is designed as a simple introduction to the work of the child health clinic. It is targeted at general practitioners, clinical medical officers, and junior hospital paediatricians. It covers the general features of child health surveillance and the management of the types of common physical, social, emotional, and behavioural problems that present in the child health clinic.

While there is every virtue in being simple, I feel that the book will leave the reader to underestimate the level of clinical skill and knowledge that is required. For example, under the section of hearing testing, there is no emphasis on the level of clinical training required to do this competently. Under hearing testing and the role of the nurse in the clinic, it says that the clinic nurse can help with testing hearing, though again with no mention of the training that would be needed.

There are various other pieces of advice with which many of us would disagree. For example, the suggestion that all children whose growth curve is persistently below the 3rd centile should be referred. Another example which many would disagree with was the statement that children with undescended testes should be referred by the age of 6 if possible.

Overall, this is a disappointing book. It lacks detail and there are many statements

in it with which I would disagree, and many omissions of further information that I would regard as important. The final chapters of the book covering child abuse and handicap I found much more helpful and provided a useful summary for the child health clinic doctor.

I. POLNAY

Developmental and Neonatal Hematology. (Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Series). Edited by James A Stockman III and Carl Pochedly. Pp 348: \$86.50 hardback. Raven Press, 1988. ISBN 0-88167-339-7.

This volume, written by a group of American authors, sets out to review current knowledge and document progress in the haematology of the fetus and neonate. It does not aim to provide comprehensive coverage of all aspects of the field, and the book suffers like many other multiauthor reviews from some degree of duplication. However, there are some excellent contributions within it.

Several areas of current interest are well dealt with by one or more authors. The chapters dealing with neonatal haemostasis and platelet function strike a good balance between the basic physiology and its clinical application. Erythropoiesis by Mark S Brown is similarly well structured, with chapters on fetal and neonatal erythropoiesis, followed by chapters dealing with physiologic anaemia of infancy and factors influencing its severity.

The review of blood component treatment points out clearly the risks of transfusion in the neonatal setting, and should be useful reading to anyone regularly involved in paediatric transfusion. Another highlight is the very thorough chapter on neonatal isoimmune thrombocytopenia by V Blanchette. It might, however, have benefitted from more discussion of the commoner problem of maternal and neonatal autoimmune thrombocytopenia somewhere in the volume.

On the negative side, the chapters on haemolytic disease of the newborn do have some duplication and one questions whether technical details of exchange transfusion techniques are appropriate in this setting.

Overall, this book achieves its purpose. It provides several stimulating reviews in key topics, it is well written, very well referenced, and clearly indexed. It will be useful to interested haematologists and paediatricians dealing with neonatal problems. The excellent physiologic reviews, however, merit a wider readership.

P J DARBYSHIRE

Adult and Pediatric Urology. Edited by J Y Gillenwater, J T Grayhack, S S Howards, and J W Duckett. Pp 2095: £168 hardback (two volumes). Year Book Medical Publishers, 1987.

This book gives a broad, up to date and very thorough review of urology from 91 authors. Despite its large size (two parts, 2095 pages and 7.3 kg) it is very readable. Each subject is comprehensively discussed, beginning with basic concepts and covering the relevant physiology, anatomy, and pathology as well as the detailed diagnosis and treatment.

The bulk of the book is defined as covering adult urology, with just over one quarter being devoted to paediatric practice. Much of the adult section, however, deals with general subjects that are highly relevant to paediatric urology. These include chapters that give general background information such as the principles of the various diagnostic imaging techniques, and chapters covering conditions such as calculus formation and management, trauma, renovascular hypertension, and bladder dysfunction.

Much of the paediatric section deals with congenital abnormalities and presents the different view points on the management of difficult problems, including the arguments for and against antenatal intervention for urological anomalies. It also deals with current concepts of managing vesicoureteric reflux and covers aspects of transplantation in children.

This book has drawn together a large amount of information and will be of value to paediatric surgeons and paediatric nephrologists and of interest to general paediatricians for occasional reference.

M G COULTHARD