Book reviews


A cynical British paediatrician, should such a person exist, would be excused for thinking that a book written for perinatal pathologists would have a pitifully limited market in the United Kingdom. This book will have relevance to a much wider range of clinicians than its title might imply, however, and will also be useful to geneticists, radiologists, and even obstetricians. Paediatricians will certainly welcome this complement to Smith’s Recognisable Malformations, as they become increasingly involved in counselling parents of the malformed fetus diagnosed in utero by ultrasonography. It also happens to be one of those books that is physically unussuitable to handle and to read, although unfortunately its subject matter makes it unsuitable for the coffee table.

The first section deals with the definitions and statistics concerning pregnancy loss and perinatal death. The second section is a practical guide to the pathologist on the examination of the fetus and the placenta. Section 3 forms the bulk of the text and illustrations. A chapter on chromosomal abnormalities is followed by a sequence of chapters dealing with specific organ systems or anatomical regions. This section also contains chapters dealing specifically with the diagnosis of hydropic fetuses, and the problems associated with twin pregnancies and intrauterine infections. There are exhaustive lists based on physical findings, listing the possible associated syndromes. Section 4 describes these various syndromes, arranged in alphabetical order, and reviewed succinctly with key references. Tables and graphs of normal fetal measurements and organ weights at different gestations complete the text, and the index is clear and seems comprehensive.

The chapters dealing with individual organ systems are very liberally illustrated with well reproduced black and white pathological photographs and radiographs. Indeed the illustrations are so dense in some places that the text becomes separated from the relevant tables and illustrations. From a paediatrician’s point of view there is a merciful lack of photomicrographs. The section on chromosomal disorders is a little thin compared with very comprehensive chapters on, for instance, lethal bone dysplasias and craniofacial abnormalities. Chromosomal disorders are also omitted from section four, which describes the major features of over 300 multiple anomaly syndromes. The descriptions are necessarily brief, and one or two key references are given, of which approximately half refer to standard paediatric and half to genetic journals.

The use of this book may involve a little more page turning than is necessary using a text with a ‘page-a-syndrome’ format, but the benefit of clearly written observations of the organ systems and their defects outweighs this slight disadvantage. The wide selection of recent and technically excellent clinical photographs, the comprehensive diagnostic lists, and the thorough referencing make it an extremely useful text for neonatologists, pathologists, geneticists, and ultrasonographers. Unfortunately for those running department libraries, and fortunately for the publishers, it is a book which induces an unhealthy degree of possessiveness in the reader.

P Hope
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford


This book gives a well written and reasoned account of a controversy which concerned Europe, the United States, and the Third World over a period of more than 10 years. It gives a fascinating insight into the relationships between multinational companies (as exemplified in this case by Nestlé), consumer organisations, activists, and the mass media; the pressures which can be brought to bear by one upon the others; and the misunderstandings and acrimony which can arise when interested parties become involved. It ends on a mixed note of optimism that the conflict has been resolved to the apparent satisfaction of all parties and caution that the International Code of Marketing of Breast