

**Human Growth—A Comprehensive Treatise. Vol 1, 2, and 3.** By Frank Falkner and JM Tanner. 2nd Ed. Pp 496, 555, and 552: \$83-40, \$90-00, and \$90-00 hardback. Plenum Press, 1986. ISBN 0306-419513, 0306-419521, and 0306-41953X.

The second edition of this 'comprehensive treatise' in three volumes has 18 new chapters (13 on subjects not in the first edition) but omits the previous long historical chapter now covered admirably in Tanner's *History of the Study of Human Growth*. The first volume entitled *Developmental Biology and Prenatal Growth* concentrates on many aspects of fetal and embryonic growth, including the physiology, biochemistry, pharmacology, endocrinology, and immunity, but extends into the postnatal period with the last two subjects and also with the sections on the outcome for low birthweight infants. The first section of volume 2, entitled 'Postnatal Growth', describes growth processes at various stages of development, including bone and dental growth, body composition and endocrine aspects. The second half, entitled 'Neurobiology' may be of less general interest, concentrating on fetal and neonatal neurological development in terms of histology and function. The first five chapters of volume 3, entitled 'Methodology', describe in detail techniques of postnatal anthropometry (fetal being in volume 1) and how to use and analyse data for individuals, growth studies, and standards. The chapters that follow cover the genetics of growth, including twins, and growth in relation to environment and secular changes.

The editors describe these volumes as being useful to paediatricians, human biologists, and all concerned with child health, and to biometrists, physiologists, and biochemists working in the field of growth. It is important, however, for potential readers and purchasers to be aware that these unique comprehensive books cover the morphological, physiological, and theoretical aspects of human growth, and as such are excellent, but they are not intended to present a clinical account of growth disorders, nor do they present growth charts and standards and cannot serve as reference manuals for these.

With contributions from 84 authors, the editors are to be congratulated on compiling these volumes so admirably without dictating style. Inevitably, however, there is a lack of consistency in the form and depth of the chapters, and there is a certain amount of overlap and repetition—for example, the

growth outcome for low birthweight infants and the age of menarche in different populations each appear in three different places. One can appreciate how difficult it would be to cross reference within the manual itself, but the reference lists at the end of each individual chapter are very comprehensive. Unfortunately the reader, who may not relish purchasing all three volumes, may find difficulty in locating some subjects of interest to them, as the volumes, which are separately indexed, have titles and subtitles that are not always an adequate guide.

Some subjects covered, such as certain 'disease processes', one would not anticipate, but there are presumably included because they throw light on the normal mechanisms of growth. Examples of these are clinical disorders of sexual development in relation to neuroendocrine control of puberty and the effect on growth of chromosomal anomalies, with descriptions of the associated clinical features. In contrast, certain subjects are dealt with in surprisingly little depth. There is a strong emphasis in these volumes on the fetus, perinatal period, and infancy (occupying over half the total contents), but much less on certain aspects in older children such as the later development of neurological function and behaviour, the effects of malnutrition in the long term, and the size of various organs and tissues postnatally. Though the effects of different social backgrounds are well considered, I was surprised to find little reference to psychosocial or emotional deprivation and abuse, which are so evident and important in present day society, whereas an entire and excellent chapter is devoted to physical activity and growth in the child.

These criticisms are, however, trivial compared with my overall very favourable impression of these books and I can certainly recommend their purchase, particularly for appropriate libraries.

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**CICT: Pediatric Body CT. Vol 10.** Edited by MJ Siegel. Pp 286: £47-50 hardback. Churchill Livingstone, 1988. ISBN 0443-085331.

Paediatricians whose clinical work dictates a high degree of dependence on diagnostic

imaging will find this book useful, dependent, and well referenced. There is comprehensive coverage of the major organs with the exception of the nervous system; interesting chapters on quantitative computer tomography and ultrafast computer tomography add a delightful update.

As imaging involves many modalities those chapters that compare imaging methods and therefore maintain a good perspective are welcomed but are unfortunately few. Many chapters hardly acknowledge the clinical perspective of the use of computed tomography but no book is without its faults.

The illustrations are of high quality and the legends on the whole are appropriate. Apart from covering all the organs in the abdomen and chest there are in addition chapters specifically devoted to the neck and the muscular skeletal system. These together with the two case studies provide an added completeness to the potential use and at times overuse of computed tomography in paediatrics. The radiation burden of computed tomography fortunately has not been forgotten.

This is a useful book in which the editor has assembled acknowledged experts to write their appropriate chapters. It is essentially dedicated towards radiologists but enthusiastic paediatricians who are happy to look for specific information will find this book useful.

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**Disorders of Gastrointestinal Motility in Childhood.** Edited by PJ Milla. Pp 143: £21-50 hardback. John Wiley, 1988. ISBN 0 47191780X.

The rapid growth of paediatric gastroenterology has brought with it a number of monographs on various aspects of the subject. The latest is this which brings together 16 contributors from the United Kingdom, United States, and Belgium. Together they have produced a text which is clear, comprehensive, and of practical value to the practising paediatric gastroenterologist and general paediatrician.

The text is divided into four main sections. The first deals with the ontogeny of gastrointestinal motor activity. This is divided into three main chapters dealing with the

development of motor control, intestinal motor activity in the preterm infant, and the development of the lower oesophageal sphincter in the preterm infant. The second section deals with disordered oesophageal function in two chapters. One deals with gastro-oesophageal reflux in infancy. The second deals with reflux and chronic bronchopulmonary disease. The third section covers small intestinal disorders and colonic function in five chapters. The first is on intestinal pseudo-obstruction in childhood. The second on the pathology of this condition. The third on motility disorders in cystic fibrosis. The fourth on the irritable bowel syndrome, and the last on constipation. The final section covers therapeutics and the use of prokinetic agents.

Despite its multiauthorship Peter Milla has achieved a cohesiveness of style, clarity, and brevity. Each chapter has useful references. It is inevitable that there will be a slight degree of overlap between different authors but this is a minor fault in a book that should be useful in the understanding and management of this difficult area of paediatric gastroenterology. It should find a useful place in the libraries of general paediatricians as well as of those working entirely in paediatric gastroenterology.

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**Treatment and Prognosis: Paediatrics.** By G S Clayden and R L Hawkins. Pp 370: £17.50 paperback. Heinemann Medical Books, 1988. ISBN 0-433-06010-7.

This volume is one of the *Treatment and Prognosis* series, a multiauthor text edited by Clayden and Hawkins. The remit of the book is to provide a rapid update for these aspects of 'all important diseases of childhood' and this impossible task is valiantly attempted by the editors.

The book is designed for busy paediatricians, those preparing for examinations, and general practitioners desiring information on likely current practice at their specialist centres as well as some indication as to treatment that can be started at home.

Each bodily system is dealt with in a separate chapter, with extra chapters on neonatal disorders and poisoning. There is a fairly consistent format of around a page of text for each individual disease within

these systems, starting with a brief description of the condition and followed by numerically arranged treatment options, then paragraphs on prognosis and a plan of follow up. Some authors tend to include suggestions about investigations within the treatment protocols, though this is not generally part of the discussion. The lack of information on pathophysiology, differential diagnosis, and investigation is initially unsettling to one not used to the concept of this series.

It would be easy to criticise the balance of such an ambitious project; the neonatal section is very brief and contains only 20 lines on meconium aspiration syndrome. Pyloric stenosis is not covered at all in the book whereas benign liver tumours receive two pages and dengue one page, respectively. Having said this most chapters are very well conceived and comprehensive, although not all would agree with the opinions of some authors as to first choice treatment.

The book performs best as a source of references for the interested clinician to explore further the 'Treatment and Prognosis' of the commoner, and indeed less common, childhood disorders and can be recommended for this task, although there will always be a need to read further about the other aspects of these conditions.

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**Interviewing the Sexually Abused Child.** By David PH Jones and Mary G McQuiston. Pp 56: £4.50 paperback. Gaskell, 1988. ISBN 0 902241 23 0.

The publication of this book comes at a most opportune time given the major concerns about both the physical examination and the interview of children suspected to have been sexually abused. This is in fact the third edition of this particular publication in three years, which indicates the speed of change in this area of major concern to many professionals whose interests centre on the potentially sexually abused child, whether they be medical, social workers, or police, because sexual abuse is at the same time a traumatic event with both physical and psychological consequences, a criminal act, and a form of child abuse requiring the possibilities of consideration of care. Because a small

proportion of children show unequivocal physical signs it is essential that guides to interviewing be authoritative, and assist those who interview children to conduct both reliable and valued interviews.

David Jones and Mary McQuiston's book begins with an exploration of the predicament of the child sexual abuse victim looking at both the effects and the considerable problems that exist for children in being able to speak at all. They then review important issues for interviewers such as the fact that children are far more reliable as witnesses than was thought previously, and that their memory for central events even in the earlier years of childhood can be excellent. They examine some general principles of good interviewing including comments on the setting, presence of other parents, ways of recording a session, and which professionals should conduct such interviews and their general experience. They give an extensive guide to the interview itself, including a good exploration of language, anxieties, the use of toys and play material including the anatomically correct dolls and various forms of questioning styles and behavioural observation.

There is a good discussion of the use of facilitation which has been recommended in the Cleveland Enquiry Report as being a second stage examination by skilled and experienced interviewers. There is also an important discussion of the process of validation including the introduction of statement validation techniques which have begun to be developed in both Europe and North America.

This is an excellent introduction to the field of interviewing the sexually abused child, and will be of great value to all those professionals whose task it is to compliment the skilful physical examination of children.

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**The Child with Febrile Seizures.** By Sheila Wallace. Pp 182: £25 hardback. Wright, 1988.

Unless my mathematics is seriously flawed, the febrile convulsion rate in England and Wales is about one child every half hour. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the subject is one which continues to provide for paediatricians both employment and