

Who in perinatology, consequently each of the papers has an air of authority about it.

The book itself is in seven sections each containing four to six papers, these have been written not as transcripts of the spoken word but as short chapters mainly in the form of a review of the current state of the topic with some also including the author's original data. The first section on the epidemiology of neurodevelopmental disorders is followed by sections on the pathogenesis of handicap, intrauterine growth retardation and chronic hypoxia, and acute intrapartum asphyxia and birth trauma. The conference then turned to the preterm and very low birthweight baby with papers on intraventricular haemorrhage and ischaemia, and reviews of the changing outcome for these infants showing improved survival and decreased morbidity. Finally, there are reports of four recent follow up studies from Dundee, Uruguay, Finland/Bavaria, and Hamburg.

I found this book to be much more than just the report of a conference, it contains a wealth of information of relevance to both paediatricians and obstetricians providing clear up to date views on an important area of perinatal care. The papers are well referenced but unfortunately there is no subject index, consequently there is no alternative but to read the book from cover to cover.

One of the contributors started his chapter with a quotation from Freud (1897) 'Difficult birth in itself in certain cases is merely a symptom of deeper effects that influenced the development of the fetus'. We are just beginning to appreciate how right Freud was, perhaps the lawyers ought to read this book as well, certainly all paediatricians should.

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Manual of Hospital Paediatrics. By Garry Hambleton. Pp 360: £14.95 paperback. Churchill Livingstone, 1988. ISBN 0-443-03512-1.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines 'manual' as a small book for handy use. As a description of the author's goal it would be difficult to better. Rest assured that Dr Hambleton achieves it, and in so doing invites favourable comparison with another English Midlands paediatric institution's handbook with a latin title.

The manual is well laid out, defining or describing each condition, listing causes, symptoms and signs, differential diagnosis, investigation, and treatment. Where

relevant, simple practical advice on management and prognosis is offered, giving clear guidance as to what to expect and, most importantly for a junior paediatrician, what to tell the parents. Its scope ranges from the emergency situation to the common or garden complaints that all too often present in the small hours, such as a blocked nose or a painful ear, though sleep disturbance is not mentioned!

Five appendices include normal values, drug dosages, fluid and electrolyte needs, blood taking, and how to do a cut down. Commonly available growth charts are generously allotted 15 pages. Despite being barely large enough to use, they are infinitely preferable to tables of anthropomorphic data.

In two situations only could one find contentious advice: hyposensitisation is recommended in favour of systemic antihistamines and in suspected meningitis and established coma no warning is given about the danger of coning in the absence of papilloedema. This is a distinctly useful addition to many a houseman's pocket, and at an affordable price, therefore I shall be recommending it to my junior paediatric staff.

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