
Diseases specific to the paediatric period are intimately related to the processes of growth and development and thus tend to be expressed at the time when development progresses most rapidly in fetal and early neonatal life. Scientific and diagnostic advances have moved inexorably towards the point of inception of diseases and in the structural and vascular anomalies in the embryo and immature fetus. To many non-medical and some medical people the terms perinatal pathology and paediatric pathology have become synonymous. There is thus an almost insurmountable problem in presenting an overview of a subject which is so heavily weighted towards the fetal end but contains important conditions that present only in infancy or childhood.

This task is one that is now attempted only by Professor Berry, whose book thus occupies a unique position. How has Professor Berry managed to live up to the expectations of fetal and perinatal pathology in producing a second edition? The new edition is as well produced and illustrated as the original and is clearly written throughout with an elegance that is imparted by some of this book's pages. The book has not changed in overall emphasis, perhaps because neither editor nor many of the contributors are practising paediatric pathologists.

In the first chapter, on examination of the fetus, there is a new section on the neonatal necropsy and a few additional tables to aid in determining fetal maturation. The chapter on the placenta has been excluded in favour of a new chapter by RO Kaschula on infectious diseases. The rest of the book has been updated to varying levels by the original authors. Although some chapters, such as those on the respiratory system and sudden unexpected death, are replete with recent references, others contain relatively few references to work published within the last 10 years. Surprisingly, the new chapter on infectious diseases, while dealing at length with congenital syphilis, contains no mention of AIDS, although the topic is touched on briefly elsewhere in the book.

Many of the chapters in this text are good introductory reviews of the subject and some are extremely useful for reference purposes. The work as a whole remains in that indeterminate position as neither an everyday bench book for the practising pathologist nor a comprehensive academic reference book on paediatric pathology. It is a work for the departmental or hospital library rather than individual purchase.


With nine editors, 305 (largely American) authors and nearly 2000 closely typed pages one would be disappointed if this book did not prove to be a comprehensive source as intended by Professor Becker and his colleagues! The only practical approach to a review of such a tome for this journal was to see if it fulfilled such a remit for a paediatrician with an interest in endocrinology.

The work is laid out in a disease oriented format with specific chapters on anatomy, physiology, and pathology within the affected system. Each section includes a chapter on the paediatric aspects of each condition where appropriate. This design means that it is often necessary to look in several places to gain the full information as there is not an extremely comprehensive. There is little historical information and the references are very topical.

Although references are provided at the end of each section, paediatric endocrinologists will find the coverage of their interest rather skimpy and lacking in discussion of the more current controversies and research. For instance, there is very little concerning non-conventional indications for growth hormone treatment or the surgical approaches to short stature in skeletal dysplasias. The therapeutic options for juvenile thyrotoxicosis are mentioned but not assessed critically. For a clinician used to focusing on the impact of an endocrinopathy on the rate of growth the section on auxology is also disappointing. Many of the named drugs are given with American equivalents and SI unit conversion factors are only given in an appendix. The doses for children are often stated baldly, without allowance for body size or individual variation.

The book succeeds best as a reference for those seeking information outside their usual field of interest and those needing an up to date account of the physiological and metabolic basis for a disease process. There is also entertaining coverage of some extremely rare conditions (such as 'hamburger thyrotoxicosis') secondary to the ingestion of thyroid gland itself or from an abattoir and some high quality black and white illustration. At only $125, which puts the cost of many comparable recent British editions to shame, this reference text should find its way on to the shelves of our libraries as a source book for a wide range of clinicians and scientists. A paediatrician wishing to own a definitive textbook specifically relating to endocrinology in childhood might find the second edition of Brook's Clinical Paediatric Endocrinology a more appropriate choice.


Operative Paediatric Urology raises the technical manual to the level of an art form. David Frank and Herbert Johnston have produced a beautiful account of the open operations of the specialty. The text is concise, the layout stimulating, and the illustrations, to the surgical eye at least, visually pleasing. The illustrators, Philip Wilson, should be credited for his contribution to the success that this book will undoubtedly enjoy. Paediatric urology is breaking new ground. The editors have endeavoured to reflect this in their choice of subjects and authors. The powerful influence of Liverpool upon the specialty is clearly evident. Mr Johnston has contributed a number of chapters himself and the Liverpool pool has written an excellent chapter on urinary diversion. There are also excellent contributions from some of the many distinguished Americans who spent time as visiting fellows.
The topics range from the humble circumcision (an operation which nevertheless is often badly performed) to the technical tour de force of cloacal reconstruction and exstrophy closure. Dr Duckett on hypospadias, Dr Pena on persistent cloaca, and Mr Mundy on urostomy and ureteric reimplantation. The surgery of Wilms' tumour and congenital adrenal hyperplasia is also well covered. Surgeons are individualists and it would be surprising if one could not find points to quibble about. A more serious criticism relates to the limits that the editors have imposed upon themselves. In their wish to avoid a ‘multivolumed encyclopedia’ they have omitted descriptions of endoscopic techniques. This is a pity. The average reader might reasonably have turned to this book for guidance on endoscopic urethral surgery, laparoscopy, and possibly the submuscular injection (STING) technique for correcting reflux. Surgical procedures for the treatment of urinary calculi have been excluded—on the grounds that adult urologists will already be familiar with these. Perhaps so, but paediatric surgeons may not be and paediatric surgeons surely represent a sizable section of the market this book will be aimed at. Other omissions include ureteric stent procedure, the valuable Mitrofanoff operation, and artificial sphincter surgery.

Every surgeon who operates on the paediatric urinary tract will value this beautifully illustrated book—but many will wish that the coverage of the subject had been more complete.

D F M THOMAS
Consultant paediatric urologist/surgeon


Surveys suggest that the general public, although showing a great interest in medical and scientific topics, have in fact a poor understanding. Giving parents insight into the underlying basis of their child’s medical problem can be difficult but rewarding. Booklets explaining childhood disorders are a useful aid to families, and well established in clinical practice. The available literature is now extended to include ‘Your child with congenital adrenal hyperplasia’.

This is a bright attractive book written for parents in simple language, well illustrated with colourful diagrams and cartoon pictures. The contents include an introduction about the adrenal gland, the biochemical disorder in congenital adrenal hyperplasia, maintenance and emergency treatment, the cause and management of virilisation, comments on inheritance, and prenatal treatment. Topics are tackled concisely, but readers without any medical or scientific background will have difficulty understanding some sections. The function of adrenal enzymes, or the sexual differentiation of the fetus, will always require a careful patient explanation from a paediatrician with an interest in this area.

Undoubtedly some parents will not attempt to read this book and others will only derive limited benefit from it. However, it should be available in any clinic treating children with congenital adrenal hyperplasia as a valuable supplement or stimulus to discussion.

D J CARSON
Consultant paediatrician


For parents facing anxiety and disbelief at being told that their child has Down’s syndrome, this easily read paperback would provide some answers to the myriad of questions resulting from their emotional turmoil.

The book begins with a comprehensive range of reactions which may be experienced by the parent, offering some reassurance that their feelings are not unusual. There are straightforward biological explanations of the condition, a grasp of which helps parents greatly in coming to terms with the situation. There follows an introduction into the health and development of children with Down’s syndrome, with information about the various educational pathways which may be available.

For the more distant future, the book outlines the rapidly changing attitudes of society to people with intellectual disability, emphasising increasing opportunities for employment and social integration.

The positive style in which the book is written does much to encourage parents to begin the task of giving the love and support essential to their child’s future.

If the book has any irritations, it is the occasional feeling that ‘doctor knows best’. Many parents of handicapped children require explanations of the reasoning behind any advice given; this enables them to take a more active role in making important decisions as to the most appropriate course to follow for their child.

RICHARD BURDEN
Parent


Metabolic bone disease is not a common problem in general paediatrics but it is impossible to avoid it entirely. The spectrum of sub-speciality interest in bone disease is illustrated by the diverse background of the 30 contributors to this book. The clinically oriented chapters are interesting, although a little repetitive. Topics covered include the various causes of rickets, hyper-responsiveness to vitamin D, osteoporosis, osteogenesis imperfecta, and skeletal dysplasias. The short chapter by the late Harold Harrison was especially clear and his characteristic style of including case histories could have been adopted by other authors with good effect. The more scientifically orientated chapters on vitamin D, circadian rhythms, and resistance to vitamin D are probably of less interest to the clinician. The researcher may also be disappointed for although the scientific developments are well covered, none of the 1200 references have been published within the last three years.

A lot of information is made available in this relatively small but expensive book. It may be of interest to some paediatricians some of the time but will not suit any group all, or even most, of the time. Those paediatricians with sub-specialty interests in metabolism, nephrology, neonatology, genetics, and orthopaedics will have more extensive sources of information already available to them.

D J CARSON
Consultant paediatrician


All paediatricians see and manage many children with acute and chronic chest disease and this book provides an excellent and comprehensive account of both common and uncommon paediatric respiratory disorders. This is the third edition in not many years and illustrates, not only the increased awareness and importance of respiratory illness in children, but also the advances in better understanding and treatment. It originates from perhaps the leading paediatric respiratory department in the world and combines a scientific and practical approach; much of the objective data comes from their department with the clinical and therapeutic advice being based upon the authors’ own extensive clinical experience. The format of this book is similar to the previous editions, with the chapters on epidemiology of respiratory infections and asthma, the management of asthma, and cystic fibrosis being updated and providing a ‘state of the art’ account.

Other chapters cover neonatal disorders, suppurative lung disease, tuberculosis, rarer lung diseases, congenital malformations, and a new chapter on lung infections and infection in the compromised host. There are useful chapters on respiratory noises and cough; even the chapter on physiology is not too difficult to follow and should be read by candidates preparing for the higher examinations.

All paediatricians, whether in hospital or the community should have access to this book. Indeed, if this were so, the work load of one paediatric respiratory physician would be reduced.

P H WELLER
Consultant paediatrician