C L NEWMAN
Consultant paediatrician


The National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital (NAWCH) Charter for Children in Hospital, published in 1985, provided us with a clear comprehensive statement of children’s needs when in hospital care, whether in Manchester or Muikka Flugga. Now comes son of NAWCH, or the NAWCH Quality Reviews, itself emerged from the Quality Checklist for Caring for Children in Hospital published in 1988.

Its stated aim is to provide a tool to look at the total experience of children in hospital care: as an outpatient, in operating theatres and radiography departments, as well as in the hospital wards where children are looked after. All the staff of the encounter—porters, receptionists, nurses, or doctors—are also included. By doing this, a profile of the services provided in a district can be drawn up and can act as the basis of a dialogue between clinical staff and managers about the service for which they are mutually responsible.

The first part of the book outlines the rationale behind current policies relating to the care of children. It then proceeds to give detailed quality checklists under separate headings in two main categories—policy and planning and service provision for children. Examples of the first are on district health authority policy and planning and nursing policy. In the second category there are indeed checklists for outpatient clinics, diagnostic and support services, and accident and emergency departments. To round off this section there are two questionnaires for parents.

Personal experience of using this document in an average sized NHS district over the past nine months has shown its usefulness in compiling a picture of the service drawn from the responses of a wide range of staff. It clearly showed areas of strength and weakness and areas of confusion between different members and groups of staff, and had a remarkable ability to clarify issues for dialogue with managers of the service. It was readily accepted by the district general manager and district health authority as the basis for quality assessment and its recognition of the national initiatives in service contract. Finally it was helpful as a tool to discuss problems in common with members of staff who deal with children as only a part of their overall work, for example, anaesthetists, outpatient nurses, and ear, nose, and throat surgeons. It provides a basis for discussion rather than a threatening confrontation over issues that arise.

In the current climate of changes in the NHS, this book provides an invaluable guide to those working with children. Each children’s department should purchase at least two copies so that it is readily available for the use of both clinical and managerial personnel. I await with interest the production of a similar volume dealing with community child health.

RICHARD J PURVIS
Consultant paediatrician


This book is based on a seminar on paediatric hepatobiliary disease, which is the third of a series of seminars on paediatric disease held at The Gant in Aspen, Colorado. It is greatly to the credit of our American colleagues that they managed to tear themselves away from the ski slopes long enough to produce this excellent book, which provides an up to date view on many aspects of paediatric liver disease. The contributors include paediatricians, pathologists, and basic scientists and are drawn from many centres in the United States, notably the Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, and the University of Colorado, Denver.

It does not attempt to be a comprehensive textbook but provides recent information and an insight into many enigmatic and difficult topics in paediatric liver disease. It is definitely a book for specialists or subspecialists who have an interest in liver disease and its associated problems. I would think its general appeal is limited as it is not comprehensive enough to use as a reference text for general paediatricians. However, it is helpful for mine paediatricians researching a specific problem.

The topics include many of the ‘usual’ problems such as infantile cholangiopathy, biliary atresia, total parenteral nutrition associated cholestasis, an update on α1 antitrypsin deficiency, and an obligatory, but rather brief, chapter on liver transplantation.

I was interested by the attempt to unravel the mysteries of Reye’s syndrome and its metabolic mimickers (William F Balistreri), and was impressed by the contribution on systemic disorders associated with hepato- biliary dysfunction (Basil J Zitelli).

The chapter on fulminant hepatic failure was well discussed (Ronald Sokol), and was one of the few chapters with a good guide to the management of this fatal condition. Less impressive were the chapters on acute and chronic hepatitis, which were rather mundane and out of date with little discussion of the new and exciting advances in autoimmune hepatitis, hepatitis C, antiviral treatment, and vaccine prevention of this illness. The chapter on liver transplantation was too brief and not sufficiently up to date for the readership of experts for whom the book is intended.

There is a practical section on the pathology of inherited metabolic disorders (Kamal G Dhillon) and hepatic allograft pathology after transplant (Rodney S Markin) very clear with helpful summaries of these difficult areas.

There is much emphasis on the difficulties of making a diagnosis in many curious conditions. Disappointingly, there is very little practical help given in the management of these disorders. I was particularly disappointed to find that there is no mention of the psycho-social aspects of liver disease and the necessity to provide support for families of children with such devastating illnesses.

As in most published seminars, the chapters tend to read like scripts for a lecture, but despite this drawback the topics are well reviewed and well illustrated. It would be most helpful to paediatricians in training, or practising in gastroenterology, hepatology, or metabolic disease.

In summary this book attempts to bring up to date the less well known areas of paediatric liver disease, and is fascinating reading for the select group of paediatricians concerned with these problems, but it will not be of interest to the general paediatrician and neither is it meant to be.

DEIRDRE KELLY
Consultant paediatric hepatologist


This book aims to present current thinking, both in management and research in the field of childhood rheumatology. It is based on an international symposium that commemorated the retirement of Dr Barbara Ansell, and is not aiming to be an up to date comprehensive textbook but to focus upon changing knowledge of the few chapters with a good guide to learn more from this book than having attended the meeting.
The book is divided into three parts: firstly, juvenile chronic arthritis, secondly, the differential diagnosis of juvenile chronic arthritis and thirdly, the rarer connective tissue diseases. Some aspects of paediatric rheumatology, such as immunogenetic aspects, have changed greatly over the past 10 years and were comprehensively covered. They provided good resumes with numerous recent references. Other topics have changed little in recent years and therefore some sections did not add much that was new.

I realise that there was international authorship but I was slightly irritated by the inconsistent use of JCA/JA/JRA terminology. The difference in their uses in Europe, America, and worldwide was explained but I would still have preferred consistent use of one terminology throughout the book.

This book has a place, not least as a useful source of current references, and I am sure it will be bought by all those who attended the meeting as well as those who were unfortunate to miss it. The book highlights the state of the art at the end of the era led by Dr Ansell's enthusiasm.

HELEN VENNING
Consultant community paediatrician