
The best thing the old General Nursing Council did was to put a question in the final nursing examinations about haemophilia. Since then, nurses regularly attend the Haemophilia Centre for training in hospital and home care, and the whole hospital seems more aware of the disease and its problems. Dr Jones' book is written for the haemophilic and his family, and describes all they need to know and more about the disease. It should similarly raise awareness about the disease for the layman. This is the third edition. It is comprehensive and comprehensible. The details are written in terms which all can understand and the diagrams are clear and simple. The popularity of earlier editions can be judged by the fact they have been published in six other languages. Over the years I have forgotten how many copies my department has bought to lend to patients, but they are numerous. Once they go, they rarely come back.

How does this differ from earlier editions? The book is now printed with more words to the page, the informative box is slightly larger. A new first chapter reassures the parents of a newly diagnosed child. The statement that 'he has as much chance of being captain of one of his country's sports teams as his father' may be taken two ways. Other new chapters include information on side effects of treatment such as liver disease and infection, HIV and AIDS, and on haemophilia care in developing countries. Dr Jones adds in a volume of vaccination schedules including hepatitis B. There are many new diagrams and increased information about contraception, factors VIII and IX, von Willebrand's disease, and anticoagulant therapy. Another innovation is the inclusion of photographs of haemophiliac boys enjoying a range of physical activities, despite some obviously bad knees and legs. These are all improvements.

My own experience tells me that the earlier editions served their purpose well, and I have no doubt that this edition will do the same. Its message, as the author states, is 'life first, haemophilia second'. However, in his attempt to reduce the anxieties of parents newly faced with a diagnosis of haemophilia, the author plays down the severity of the disease. For many patients, even with first class management, the disease presents major problems for their enjoyment of life and ability to work and play, and their prospects. Even so, all families of a child with haemophilia should read and study it. If they do, they will know more about the disease than their paediatricians.

This edition of Infections and Immunizations in Children, which I reviewed at the time of publication, describes all we should ever need to know about the disease but is not as good as the original for several reasons. The main problem is that it is too short (80 pages). Another is that it is out of date (the first edition was published in 1990, the second in 1991). The book is still useful, but it is in urgent need of updating.


Inoculation against smallpox appears to have been first used in the 6th century BC by the Chinese, who implanted bamboo splinters dipped in pustular material into the nasal mucosa of uninfected individuals. The protective effect of cowpox against natural smallpox infection was folk wisdom for many generations before the discovery of viral virology. It was not until the last hundred years immunisation has been an even larger contributor to the health of individuals and nations. With the development of gene manipulation by molecular biology, and the ability to produce purified antibody by in vitro techniques, its day is only just dawning.

This book then appears at a watershed in the development of immunisation, and provides a bridge linking scientific advance and knowledge on the one hand, with everyday clinical practice on the other. It has been rapidly and professionally put together by the British Paediatric Association Standing Committee on Immunisation and Vaccination.

The book is directed towards all concerned in paediatric primary care, junior hospital staff, paramedical staff, and parents, and is divided into sections. The first of these discusses the general diagnosis and management of common infections in childhood from a problem orientated viewpoint, for example, the child with a rash and the child with diarrhoea. The second section provides short summaries of specific childhood infections, with particular detail of recently recognised conditions such as AIDS and Kawasaki disease.

This is followed by a short section on the collection of specimens for laboratory diagnosis and a long and comprehensive section on immunisation, including a very helpful discussion on practical problems. How should you immunise a child with diarrhoea or a chest cough when they come to clinic? What about the baby who is said to have had whooping cough or measles? What is the relevance of a history of fits or febrile convulsions?

The book concludes with detailed advice on travelling abroad with a child, a series of useful appendices, and a bibliography for further reading.

This second edition has been extended and brought up to date and is beautifully laid out, simple, straightforward, and authoritative. Demanding a place in every GP's surgery, accident and emergency unit, and in every general paediatric ward in the country, it is a model of clarity and precision. It is a minor pity that with all medical texts were half as good as this.

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My personal paediatric library is kept up to date by the editors of the Archives supplying me with excellent books, ostensibly for review. I'm beginning to wonder though, is this just kindness on a subtle hint? Am I not the editor who heard something that I haven't?

This latest splendid edition to my bookshelf is based on the most recent paediatric conference held by the Royal College of Physicians. A number of distinguished subspecialists review changes in practice over the last five years, and speculate on how these will influence paediatrics in the next decade. The book, Paediatric Speciality Practice for the 1990s, teaches medicine for the 1990s. It will be welcomed by paediatricians and paediatric surgeons, although it is presented in a somewhat formal style.

For example, the chapter on rheumatic fever and Kawasaki disease provides another example of an otherwise splendid book. The chapter begins with a description of the clinical features of rheumatic fever, and the pathogenesis of the disease. Then, 'we move on briefly to Kawasaki disease... The rather deep discussion of Kawasaki disease continues in the next section, and concludes with an authoritative description of the management of the disease, including treatment of coronary artery aneurysms.'

The editor, Dr John Glennon, has written an essay on the philosophy of the Royal College of Physicians. He discusses the purposes of the college and the aims of its members. He explains that the college aims to improve the practice of medicine and to promote research in the profession. He also describes the college's role in the education and training of physicians. Finally, he outlines the college's policies and procedures for handling complaints and grievances.

Despite these limitations, the book is an excellent resource for anyone interested in the current state of the practice of medicine.