A new edition of what was Jelliffe's textbook of 'tropical paediatrics' is very welcome. Jelliffe in his foreword to the 4th edition talks of two main routes to be balanced in the effective promotion of child health, that is, specialisation, and child health and community. This book encompasses both routes. There are six sections, each with its own editor and 15–20 contributors. The first three general sections cover maternal and child health, maternal and neonatal care, growth and development. Two disease specific sections follow, that is, infectious disease and diseases of systems. There is a final section on practical aids.

The contents contained everything it should. Although it is invidious to praise specific contributions, my favourite were: immunisation, protein energy malnutrition, and tuberculosis; other people might choose others. One problem I found was that some subjects were divided so that at times it was difficult to track down the relevant parts in the book, for example, gastroenteritis is dealt with in maternal and child health (oral rehydration services) and in infectious diseases (diarrhoeal diseases). Nutritional supplementation programmes appear in the child health section, and nutritional rehabilitation is in the nutrition section of growth and development. In such a large book it was difficult to get an overall feel for the major medical causes of child mortality, and morbidity in the topics. The top three, that is, respiratory infection, diarrhoeal disease, and protein energy deficiency are all there and are dealt with effectively but get lost to some extent in the pith of the book. The remainder of the top 10 such as malaria, anaemia, tuberculous, and so on are again dealt with well but their relative importance to overall child health is not clear. The introductory chapter might have set the scene better. Informative as it is, the chapter contains very selective mortality statistics but little breakdown by age and cause, and few measurements of morbidity. Perhaps my difficulties show I have become wedded to the medical model while the authors have escaped this straight jacket. The chapters/sections on cultural factors, delivery of individual services, the doctor as teacher, and child care in refugee situations are fascinating. They would not have been included in the previous edition, and the book is much stronger as a result.

The editors say in their preface 'a balance has to be struck between the assembly of the information and instruction needed by the paediatrician in the reference centres of excellence, and the study and practice of management at the level of primary care'. The authors have achieved a commendable balance of emphasis in this very wide field.

## Book Reviews

### Diseases of Children in the Subtropics and Tropics


The editors of this series have again provided a useful and interesting update of important topics in paediatric infectious disease. This volume covers new developments in vaccines against four major paediatric pathogens: *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, pertussis, rotavirus, and varicella. There are also three chapters on specific infections, namely measles, ehrlichiosis, and human herpes virus 6 (HHV-6) and four chapters dealing with general issues such as viral encephalitis, infected burns, skeletal infections, and the screening of immigrant children.

As the entire book essentially from US based authors, inevitably all material presented is applicable to British or Australian paediatric practice. The authorship, as with previous volumes, comprises several recognised leaders in paediatric infection.

True to its objective, this volume covers issues of contemporary concern with references right up to 1990. This is exemplified by the chapter on new developments in vaccines. It documents the change in US policy regarding the recommended age of immunisation against *H influenzae* type b. In March 1990, universal immunisation was recommended at 15 months of age instead of 18 months, but by October last year, this was again revised to recommend immunisation from 2 months of age, a change which was hinted at as pending in the text.

The infectious aetiology of several paediatric syndromes has been elucidated in recent years. This gratifying shift in understanding is reflected in the chapter on HHV-6, the cause of roseola infantum, also known rather appropriately as sixth disease.

The ongoing problems presented by pertussis and measles are expertly covered, though it is odd that the issue of pertussis should be covered again since it appeared in the previous volume. Also surprising was that in the authors' presentation of their contrastive views on the timing of licensure of acellular pertussis vaccines, one argued anecdotally regarding the reactogenicity of whole cell pertussis vaccine.

In the chapters on viral encephalitis and screening immigrant children, the authors have taken a practical approach in which they document their own strategies of management. The topics of infected burns and skeletal infections are dealt with ably and comprehensively.

The book is attractively presented and well referenced and apart from confusing staphylococcus with streptococcus in two tables dealing with paediatric skeletal infections, there are few typographical errors. It is of relevance to practice in the paediatric infectious disease field. Given that infection is the 'bread and butter' of general paediatric practice, most chapters in this volume will be appreciated by the general paediatrician who is keen to keep abreast of advances in this interesting field.

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Rank professor of human nutrition  

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When a child has cancer what are the needs of those around him as regards information? First and foremost, of course, they need a sympathetic paediatric oncologist who has the time to sit down and explain the problem in detail. As there are so many factors that are peculiar to the individual child it may be misleading to turn to books for information without guidance.

Dr Ekert's book is intended for parents, relatives, and friends of children and adolescents with cancer. Of the 22 chapters, the first