

**Pediatric Clinical Skills.** Edited by Richard B Goldbloom. (Pp 332; £29.95 paperback.) Churchill Livingstone, 1992. ISBN 0-443-0873-0.

There is a great British tradition in handbooks of clinical methods for adult medicine. Both Hutchison's *Clinical Methods* and Macleod's *Clinical Examination* now have a chapter on the special techniques for children. However, this pioneering Canadian work is written with the child in mind throughout.

The impressive thoughts and feelings in the foreword could alleviate much of the current low morale of junior paediatricians in this country. Nuala Kenny powerfully portrays the challenges and rewards of children's medicine, and explains why *clinical skills* are paramount in this field.

The book's weakness is that the 14 chapters describing examination of the systems are each written by a different sub-specialist. While the student or junior doctor reader will gain many facts, he is left without a distinct style of approach that a single author text might achieve.

The ophthalmic chapter almost instils a fear of examining children, suggesting examination of the child before or during history taking – to encourage him to put up with you – and the frustration of fundoscopy – 'most young children will not hold their eyes still' for the examining doctor. In contrast, the neurological chapter teaches how to make a thorough examination enjoyable for child and doctor alike. This outstanding chapter gives plentiful tips and tricks including a most effective way of maintaining toddlers' visual fixation for fundoscopy: the child is asked to report when mother sticks out her tongue!

The print is pleasing and well illustrated, the need for such a book clear; I recommend it.

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**Handbook of Pediatric Epilepsy.** Edited by Jerome V Murphy and Fereydown Dehkharghani. (Pp 375; US\$125.00 hardback.) Marcel Dekker, 1993. ISBN 0-8247-8725-0.

Epilepsy is an unpopular and poorly taught subject at all levels of medical education; in part this reflects an ignorance and almost fugue-like apathy about the subject and also a basic mistrust of a complicated and ever changing classification. Therefore, when only the third book on paediatric epilepsy is published, one could justifiably hyperventilate with optimistic anticipation. A *Handbook of Pediatric Epilepsy* may well seize the reader's attention, but this seizure is more likely to be partial than convulsive (dramatic) or myoclonic (startling).

The book is generally well designed, although the chapter sequence is not entirely logical. In addition, a number of chapters duplicate material while others contain material that is not relevant to the title. The book is extensively referenced but not without some errors, notably the omission of the last page in a number of references. The information within the pages is comprehensive, well presented and, importantly for a handbook, easy to read. The chapters on the effects of epilepsy on behaviour, adverse effects on antiepileptic drugs, genetics and the adolescent female/pregnancy, address important and developing issues in paediatric epilepsy and

are particularly well written. The chapter on community support services is also useful but both this chapter and the chapter discussing the legal issues of epilepsy in children are only partly relevant to epilepsy care in Great Britain, in view of the American authorship. The most obvious criticism is the surprising omission of a section on the new antiepileptic drugs. Although most of these drugs are not as yet licensed in North America, and the intended 'audience' is generalist rather than specialist, this should not have precluded their inclusion in a book of this quality, depth, and cost. There are a few other omissions; there was no comment on the often very close similarity between night terrors and seizures arising from the frontal lobes and no mention of narcolepsy or cardiac dysrhythmias in the differential diagnosis of epilepsy, which is an important area for the general paediatrician for whom this book is primarily written. It was surprising that paraldehyde should be regarded as a 'secondary' drug in the treatment of status epilepticus. The exclusion of electroencephalograms in illustrating various epilepsy syndromes and types of epilepsy from the book is understandable in view of the intended readership and, presumably, also in the interest of cost.

The value and relevance of any 'new' book on paediatric epilepsy has to be measured against what is already available. The *Handbook of Pediatric Epilepsy* adds little information when compared with books written some years earlier and fails to discuss the development of the new antiepileptic drugs. This book is intended for 'primary care givers', which in North America refers mainly to general paediatricians. I think that the book achieves this objective, as a short, practical, and easy to read, day to day guide to epilepsy in children. However, for the more informed clinician who already has some pre-existing knowledge of epilepsy, or who requires a definitive reference text, then this book would not be the preferred choice; as Samuel Rogers put it 'when a new book is published, read an old one'.

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**Pregnancy Diabetes and Birth. A Management Guide.** 2nd Ed. By Dorothy Reycroft Hollingsworth. (Pp 288; £54 hardback.) Williams and Wilkins, 1992. ISBN 0-683-04103-7.

This is a well organised account of the obstetric and perinatal management of patients with insulin dependent, non-insulin dependent, and gestational diabetes. It will principally be of interest to obstetricians, endocrinologists, and perinatologists concerned with the care of the mother. A single brief section deals with the infants of diabetic mothers of greater relevance to neonatologists and this provides no greater information to that found in all standard neonatal textbooks.

The book is clearly laid out. In the 11 sections covering 288 pages and 829 references the contents include a good up to date guide covering the genetics of diabetes, the role of the placenta, and endocrinological changes in pregnancy. It includes a comprehensive guide to the dietary, insulin, and exercise management in pregnancy and details the fetal obstetric complications, methods of fetal surveillance, and intrapartum management.

SI units are not used except sporadically throughout the text making assimilation of the information provided problematical for the British reader.

It is likely that the book will be of use as an obstetric reference book rather than essential reading for neonatologists concerned with the care of infants of diabetic mothers.

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**Caffey's Pediatric X-Ray Diagnosis: An Integrated Imaging Approach.** Vols 1 and 2. 9th Ed. By Frederic N Silverman and Jerald P Kuhn. (Pp 1144 and 2147; £276 hardback.) Mosby Year Book, 1993. ISBN 0-8151-1462-1.

John Caffey was 50 when he published the first edition of his 'bible' of paediatric radiology in 1945. The first section of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* published in that same vintage year bore the subtitle *Et in Arcadia Ego*. Had Caffey's quarter century conversion to radiology also been an entry into Arcady? Could he have imagined all his book now encompasses almost half a century or in its ninth edition. Could we have expected so much new in less than a decade from the eighth edition of 1985? *Quo vadis?*

This, like previous editions, is a comprehensive textbook of paediatric radiology, weighted towards its role of solving clinical problems, although of necessity the clinical detail is brief. There are omissions, but these are minor. The emphasis in this edition is on displaying the independent roles of imaging techniques in the varying organ intersystems. Little mention is made of the role of interventional radiology, and where it can be appropriately used in the management of clinical problems.

The detail of rarer conditions is brief, but most are mentioned, so that a search through the text will provide basic radiological information and references to further reading. If the information sought is an account of radiological appearances of the slightly less rare and common conditions, then this book fulfils this requirement.

The bias is towards North American practice, and references, which are included at the end of each chapter, are heavily biased towards the North American literature. One might be forgiven for thinking that there is no paediatric radiology elsewhere. Citing of references at the end of the chapter without individual citation in the text is unusual, but a practice that I personally find good. Textbooks should stand as their own reference, further reading being provided in the references. Reference citation for each individual point is the province of journals.

The images, line drawings, and diagrams are of a very high standard.

It is not a book for individual ownership, but for departmental paediatric libraries.

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**Paediatric Emergency Medicine.** Edited by E Reisdorff, M Roberts, and J Wiegenstein. (Pp 1156; £95 hardback.) W B Saunders Company, 1992. ISBN 0-7216-3281.

Good medical practice requires easy access to up to date factual information at the