

Book Reviews : Boekbesprekings

HANTERING VAN PASGEBORENES

Neonatal Emergencies and other Problems. Deur John Black, M.D., F.R.C.P. Pp. v + 282. R7,50. Londen en Durban: Butterworths. 1972.

Alle persone wat gemoeid is met die hantering van pasgeborenes, asook mediese studente, sal hierdie boek nuttig vind. Dit sal egter, vanweë 'n gebrek aan 'diepte' nie kinderartse en nagraadse studente heeltemal bevredig nie. Die belangrikste neonatale noodgevalle asook ander belangrike probleme van pasgeborenes word op 'n kernagtige en praktiese wyse bespreek. 'n Hoogtepunt is die teenwoordigheid van verskeie nuttige tabelle wat o.a. die uitwerking wat middels en infektiewe en non-infektiewe moederlike siektetoestande op die fetus en pasgeborene kan hê, aandui. 'n Leemte is dat die boek uiters karig geïllustreer is en nie 'n enkele foto bevat nie.

B.J.P.

CHOLECYSTITIS

Acute Cholecystitis. By C. J. Schein, M.D. Pp. xv + 309. Illustrated. \$17,50. New York: Harper & Row. 1972.

This monograph deals extensively with the historical, background, aetiology and pathophysiology of acute cholecystitis. The discussion on the clinical diagnosis and radiological assessment of this disease is comprehensive. The section describing operative techniques, postoperative management and complications will be of great help to the clinician.

Special problems relating to this disease are discussed together with details of management. The X-rays and diagrams presented in the text are clear and concisely annotated. The summaries of the 'Monographs in biliary surgery' make an interesting and informative addendum. This monograph should prove useful to all medical practitioners in the diagnosis and management of this disease.

J.M.I.

SPINAL DYSRAPHISM

Spinal Dysraphism. C. C. M. James, Ph.D., F.R.C.S. and L. P. Lassman, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. Pp. viii + 144 Illustrated. R8,80. London and Durban: Butterworths. 1972.

This interesting monograph is divided into 2 main sections, one dealing with the embryology, pathology, diagnosis and other general considerations of the conditions under discussion. The other is an analysis of 100 cases operated on by the author.

The material is clearly presented with many useful groupings of symptoms and findings, and helpful tables. It is well illustrated by numerous photographs in both colour and black and white. The strength of this book lies in the compact but intensive review of the subject. The bibliography at the end of most chapters is fairly extensive. It is a useful addition to the collection of all specialists concerned with this subject.

D.J.J.d.K.

THE OESOPHAGUS

Surgery of the Oesophagus. The Coventry Conference. By R. Abbey Smith, Ch.H., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.S. (Edin.) and R. E. Smith, M.A., M.B., B.Ch., F.R.C.P. Pp. xvii + 240. Illustrated. R12,00. London and Durban: Butterworths. 1972.

The organizers of the Coventry Conference are to be congratulated on their production of this comprehensive book. The subject matter is very well and authoritatively covered. Especially interesting are the verbatim reports of the discussions. This has added much to the original papers presented. This book is recommended as an excellent reference volume to those who are interested in the vagaries of the oesophagus.

W.S.

BIOLOGICAL METALS

The Clinical Significance of the Essential Biological Metals. By I. J. T. Davies, M.B. (Lond.), M.R.C.P. (Lond.). Pp. x + 126. £2,10. London: William Heinemann Medical Books. 1972.

The need for a review on the medical significance of metals known to be essential to man, is clearly given by Professor R. Mahler in his Foreword to this book:

'There are several reasons why the appearance of this book is timely — there has been a recent burgeoning of new analytical techniques for measuring metals which makes it possible to determine them rapidly and with considerable accuracy in even minute amounts in biological material; important new advances have been, and are still being made in our understanding of the role of metals in determining the structure, function and stability of proteins, and especially the activity of many enzymes; and there is now a growing concern over the possible deleterious effects caused by prolonged exposure to some of the metals which are being discharged into the environment as the result of industrial processes and the burning of motor fuel in urban areas.'

The concept of essentiality is outlined in the Introduction, indicating that considerable difficulties are encountered in the judgement whether a micronutrient is essential or not. A number of criteria, derived from the literature, is therefore suggested in order to determine whether a metal is essential for human requirements.

A chapter is subsequently devoted to a review of the most important aspects of the 6 essential biological metals (zinc, copper, manganese, molybdenum, chromium and cobalt) in human nutrition. This includes absorption, distribution in the body, functions in metabolism and disorders due to a deficiency in these metals.

The book is concisely written and each chapter contains an extensive but selective list of references on the material in discussion. This would be of great value to people who are new in this field but interested in this important subject.

C.J.R.

ENDOCRINOLOGY

Recent Advances in Endocrinology. Proceedings of the Seventh Pan-American Congress of Endocrinology. Sao Paulo, Brazil, August 1970. Ed. by E. Mattar, G. de B. Mattar & V. H. T. James. Pp. 509. Illustrated. \$32,75. Amsterdam: Excerpta Medica. 1972.

Proceeding of large international meetings are not conducive to good reviewing, so may I be excused for indicating the main groupings of subjects discussed and for merely mentioning 1 or 2 individual papers likely to be of some general interest?

There are 8 main sections. The first is 'general'. Outstanding in this section is Yalow and the late Sol Berson's paper on the principles of radio-immunoassay in hormone measurement. The many figures are delightfully clear. This is followed by sections on the thyroid, gonadotrophins and androgens. Among the latter is a fantastic 18-page array of tables of biosynthesis of androgens in man. There are 2 papers — one clinical — concerning virilization, hirsutes and androgen excess. Then come sections on neuro-endocrinology, calcitonin and growth hormone. A picture of 23 000 human pituitaries in a jar is in strange juxtaposition with the larvae of the cat tapeworm (which apparently has growth-promoting potentialities).

The final section concerns insulin and diabetes and contains useful and interesting reports on pro-insulin, the multicompartmental system for insulin secretion, intestinal factors involved in insulin release, the natural history of glucose-tolerance-diabetes in young people, obesity and hyperlipaemia.

W.P.U.J.