

BOOK REVIEWS

The Natural History of Chronic Bronchitis and Emphysema

Charles Fletcher, Richard Peto, Cecily Tinker, and Frank E Speizer. (Pp 272; £9.) Oxford University Press. 1976.

Describing the largest prospective study of the preclinical stages of chronic bronchitis yet reported, this book is remarkable in two ways. First, it illustrates the value of relatively simple observations continued over a number of years by a dedicated team of workers in elucidating the natural history of a common disease. Secondly, it shows that if a study of this type is carefully planned and diligently executed expert statistical analysis can produce straightforward, unambiguous, and often unexpected conclusions. The authors have employed these techniques most effectively in their study of chronic bronchitis and have made a cogent case for a drastic reappraisal of traditional views on the pathogenesis of that disease.

Of particular importance is the distinction made between the obstructive and hypersecretory forms of chronic bronchitis, and their conclusion that acute infective exacerbations of chronic obstructive lung disease do not, contrary to popular belief, cause a permanent loss of ventilatory capacity. Another pertinent observation is that some cigarette smokers are more liable than others to develop airflow obstruction. Smoking is clearly responsible for most cases of chronic bronchitis, and the incidence of the disease would undoubtedly diminish dramatically if, by some miracle, the habit were to be abandoned by the majority of the population. It would appear, however, that other as yet undetermined factors are implicated in the production of airflow obstruction and mucus hypersecretion. If we could identify those which predetermine the increased susceptibility of some smokers to chronic bronchitis, particularly the obstructive form of the disorder, this knowledge would, as the authors point out, be of considerable value in predicting the course of the disease, and it might also provide the basis for a more rational approach to the practical aspects of prevention and treatment.

This book could well be a milestone in the bibliography of chronic bronchitis and related disorders. It deserves to be widely read not only in Britain but also in those countries where the problems posed by this common disease are even less clearly understood.

I W B GRANT

Surgical Diagnosis

George Qvist. (Pp 699; £15.) H K Lewis. 1977.

Although perfectionists may not care to admit it, much of surgical diagnosis comprises that process of instant recall from previous experience which we nickname "spot diagnosis." Provided only that his brain goes

on functioning satisfactorily, the older and more experienced the surgeon becomes the more likely he is to pull off this feat of accurate and rapid recognition of a disease with success. There is of course no substitute for many years spent on the wards and in the clinics gaining this priceless experience, but much can be learned from studying a well-illustrated atlas of common and uncommon surgical conditions together with—and this is important—the less frequent manifestations of frequently encountered diseases. There is an old aphorism which states, "Something unusual is more likely to be an uncommon presentation of a common condition than the common presentation of an uncommon condition."

George Qvist, who recently retired from the surgical staff of the Royal Free Hospital, has produced what amounts to a photographic compendium of a life-time of clinical practice. His collection of over 800 excellent black-and-white photographs, x-rays, and line drawings ranges over the complete spectrum of general surgery and orthopaedics. The collection incorporates conditions which are now uncommon in Britain owing to modern antibiotic therapy, such as gummas and surgical tuberculosis, but it is completely up to date and includes such things as starch peritonitis and the latest techniques of radiological investigation.

The accompanying text is concise and contains useful classifications, anatomical and pathological details, and the necessary special investigations as well as clear descriptions of the clinical conditions which are illustrated. This volume will certainly prove to be a useful revision for senior medical students and for surgical candidates studying for their higher degrees.

HAROLD ELLIS

Handbook of Enzyme Electrophoresis in Human Genetics

Harry Harris and D A Hopkinson. (Pp 310; \$55.95.) North-Holland. 1976.

While the understanding of the relation of enzymes to disease has developed continuously over the past three decades, initial promises have rarely been fulfilled, and there have been several subtle changes in emphasis over this time. Ideas of serum activity in relation to disease (acid phosphatase and prostatic carcinoma; amylase and pancreatitis) gave way to those of specific varieties of serum activity—in the event not what we now call isoenzymes—being related to diseases of specific organs (SGOT with heart and SGPT with liver). Then the true isoenzymes—different molecular species with the same enzyme activity, though with different kinetics—and determination of the relative proportions of these to one another increased the hope that the organ involved might be recognised by its specific pattern. Because the most discerning methods of study are technically difficult, the diagnostic value of

this form of investigation remains confined to specialist centres. Where simpler methods have been developed, such as heat and other forms of inactivation to distinguish bone from liver alkaline phosphatase, the resulting imprecision has reduced the confidence with which the results can be used in medical care.

The recognition of genetically determined enzyme abnormalities has greatly increased and more than 140 are now known, but here too caution in interpretation is needed, for not all provide the basis for clinical disease (prolinaemia type 1 and the Duarte form of galactosaemia) and a given enzyme may be defective in one of several ways with symptoms of differing severity. For example, the three types of the GM₂ gangliosidosis, found in varieties of "Tay-Sachs" disease, comprise two different abnormalities of one isoenzyme and another of two isoenzymes of hexosaminidase. However, benign variations of enzyme patterns and activity have provided genetic information.

The application of enzymology to genetics provides the origin but by no means the exclusive role of the present book, which offers all concerned with enzyme study, for whatever reason, practical guidance on the separation and further study of more than 70 enzymes. Additional information is included on tissue distribution, allelic variation, subunit structure, and chromosomal location of the gene by which the biosynthesis of the enzyme is determined.

There must be an error or two somewhere and of course the book is incomplete and will soon be dated. However, the loose-leaf construction allows supplements to be issued, and the published price includes the first two of these to appear in 1977 and 1978. Those issued later will be priced separately. Workers already engaged on enzymes will be saved many hours of library and laboratory study, and it is hoped that others will be encouraged to embark on investigations that at present seem forbidding. The qualities of this unique handbook match well those of the department from which it has sprung.

D N RAINE

The Stroke Patient: Principles of Rehabilitation

Margaret Johnstone. (Pp 84; £2.25.) Churchill Livingstone. 1976.

This is a paperback manual written by a physiotherapist who has obviously devoted a great deal of her time and thought to the care of patients with strokes. She is dedicated to the concept of teamwork, and she has tried to present the interdisciplinary approach necessary for the good management of a patient with stroke without any bias. In this sense the book is of greater value than some of the single-discipline manuals and textbooks that have been written.

Unfortunately, however, it is her very dedication and enthusiasm which prompts her

to write in a somewhat unrealistic fashion about the probable outcome from a stroke and imply that through the teamwork approach the patient will be enabled to make a very considerable recovery. Indeed the author rarely concedes that there may be some inevitable residual disability. Similarly her classification of strokes, the comments on epidemiology, and description of the underlying problems of rehabilitation are so simplistic as to be of little value, and some of the comments on outcome are very emotive.

For practising physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and nurses this is an excellent little handbook as regards the practicalities of physical management but it would have been of much greater value if the author had been more realistic on outcome and more explicit on pathology, classification, and epidemiology.

P J R NICHOLS

Crisis Intervention

J K W Morrice. (Pp 119; £4.50 hardcover. £2.25 flexicover.) Pergamon Press. 1976.

Written with the minimum of jargon, this short book is intended for a wide audience, including social workers, nurses, clergymen, and members of voluntary organisations. It has a useful list of references for those who want more detailed information. The general concepts are clearly explained, and there are some case histories which illustrate the general approach. There is a very welcome emphasis on the need for co-ordination of policies between all those involved, whether professional or lay. The book is less exciting to read than one might have expected from the title. Perhaps the author has deliberately played down the crisis element in order to emphasise that a carefully thought-out and co-ordinated approach is preferable to a dramatic short-term solution.

A A BAKER

Care for the Injured Child

The Surgical Staff, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto. (Pp 444; £16.80.) Williams and Wilkins. 1975.

Over the age of 1 year more children die of accidental injury than from any other cause, and multiple injuries cause more deaths than any other kind. This splendid book has been written as part of the commemoration of the centenary of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto by the 28 members of the surgical staff of the Hospital and 19 of their non-surgical colleagues, under the direction of Dr Robert Salter, surgeon-in-chief, and is a symbol of the co-operative team work in the treatment of injured children for which the hospital is justly renowned.

The diagnosis and management of every kind of injury including burns and scalds are described, and there are also sections on assessment, the treatment of shock, the management of multiple injuries, and general topics such as prevention of poisoning, transport, legal aspects, and epidemiology. The importance of the general surgeon as the leader of the team which manages multiple injuries is rightly emphasised. It is heartening to find in the chapter on assessment so much common sense and such good advice about the part that parents play and how they should be treated by the doctor.

This is the best and most comprehensive book of its kind and the only one devoted entirely to the injuries of childhood. It should be available in the casualty department of every hospital that treats children, and most do, because many children are involved in accidents with their parents and all are taken to the same hospital; only in a few centres are injured children treated primarily in a children's hospital. No paediatric surgeon or children's hospital can afford to be without it.

A W WILKINSON

The Medical Annual

Ed Sir Ronald Bodley Scott and Sir James Fraser. (Pp 492; £11.) John Wright. 1976.

The height of editorial sadism must be to send out for review a book which has been published for nearly a hundred years and which must be as well known to medical men as this journal. That doesn't mean to say that it's read, of course, but I wonder if anything I say will make any difference to sales or readers. For the loyal will know that the mixture is as before, with inevitably a handful of new authors of sections, who I hope will continue the tradition of personal comment on papers they pick out to review. Not everyone, and certainly not I, would agree with all the choices made from the year's work, nor are the sections always right up to date, but I shall continue to use the *Annual* as a valuable source of references to fields other than my own.

This year the special articles are on medicine and the EEC, chemotherapy of cancer, and care of patients with terminal malignancy (important as this is we do seem to have had rather a lot of it lately). One possibly constructive comment: I was interested to know the latest on beta-blockers and H₂ receptors. Each are discussed in different sections (though there is no mention, incidentally, of cimetidine) but are not always indicated in the index. Would it be an impossible editorial task to cross-reference? The inquiring reader cannot always predict which section he should consult, particularly for things like drugs and hormones.

A PATON

Reforming the Welfare

Phoebe Hall. (Pp 162; £5.50.) Heinemann. 1976.

The events, debates, and discussions which preceded the passing of the Local Authority Social Services Act, 1970, are the subject of this book. It deals in detail with the work of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Social Services chaired by Lord Seebohm. It is an interesting study and gives an insight into how governments can be influenced by interested individuals acting as members of pressure groups.

In the postwar period as the Welfare State was taking shape, social workers were trying to establish their professional identity in the face of one major handicap. They were not a unified professional group. Moreover, they were employed by a number of different local authority departments, hospitals, and other agencies. The committee of inquiry chaired by Lord Seebohm was set up as a result of pressure by a group interested in establishing social work

as a professional discipline with an independent expertise. The author states that social workers were at a disadvantage because they were a politically inexperienced lobby, but this is not borne out by the text. With a pressure group consisting of academics from the London School of Economics and the National Institute for Social Work Training the call for an inquiry could hardly have had a stronger support. This political muscle was also apparent in those chosen for membership of the committee.

The detailed descriptions of the setting up of the committee and its work makes interesting reading, although somewhat biased in favour of social workers. The quality of the evidence given by the BMA and other medical bodies is dismissed as poor and badly prepared. The interested groups among the medical profession are criticised for not mobilising their resources more effectively by consultation with other medical and paramedical bodies—a valuable suggestion to be remembered for the future. At an early stage the committee decided to recommend a unified service and then proceeded to discuss how this could be achieved together with its relationship with central and local government departments. The generic social workers versus the specialist is discussed and rationalised with the 6/6 vision of hindsight. The important social work role of the health visitor gets only the merest mention and is dismissed on the grounds that some health visitors also undertake community nursing duties.

When the Seebohm report was published the social work members of the committee were so committed to the conclusions that they stomped the country to publicise the recommendations and try to convince the many critics of the report. This is called selling the report. It was a unique procedure but a pattern likely to be followed in the future. Already it is starting in connection with the Court report, and no doubt when the Royal Commission on the National Health Service Report is published some members of the commission will take on the barnstorming role to convince doctors that the commission's recommendations are beyond reproach.

The book will be of particular interest to anyone involved in preparing evidence for a government committee. We have been reforming the welfare regularly since the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws was established in 1905. But, as the last paragraph of the text points out, the Seebohm reorganisation left many basic problems of the personal social services unsolved. In a few years time we shall have to try again.

ANDREW B SEMPLE

SELECTED TITLES

Organ Physiology: Structure and Function of the Nervous System. 2nd edn. Arthur C Guyton. (Pp 312; £7.50.) Holt-Saunders. 1976.

Organ Physiology: Structure and Function of the Cardiovascular System. 2nd edn. Robert F Rushmer. (Pp 360; £7.50.) Holt-Saunders. 1976.

Leukaemias, Lymphomas and Allied Disorders. A H Goldstone, J C Cawley, and F G J Hayhoe. (Pp 314; £6.50.) Holt-Saunders. 1976.