P. R. Betts

F. Chiarelli, K. Dahl-Jørgensen, W. Kiess (eds). Diabetes in childhood and adolescence. Karger, Basel, Switzerland, 2005

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This is the 10th volume in the series Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine published by Karger. With chapters from many authors, it provides comprehensive coverage of childhood diabetes, from the aetiology of type 1 diabetes through to treatment, complications, and future opportunities in transplantation. Like many books, it is excellent in parts, while other sections are wanting. One also wonders why some chapters have so many authors.

The first three chapters cover the aetiology of type 1 diabetes from the environmental, genetic and immunological views of various authors. The area is well covered, but might have been tied together better, if one main author had amalgamated the views of all three, bringing the influences of all these into one chapter.

The next two chapters on neonatal diabetes and MODY are good and up to date, with a brief discussion in the former on the difficult issue of management of neonatal diabetes.

The chapter on diabetic ketoacidosis is comprehensive, but I was disappointed to see it differed from the International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes (ISPAD) guidelines. On fluid replacement it advocated calculations based on surface area, not weight; bicarbonate replacement was to be considered with a pH as high as 7.1, and phosphate replacement was encouraged together with a bolus injection of insulin. All of these recommendations are different to the usual UK and ISPAD practice. It is a pity that we still do not have universal agreement on the management of this emergency. Different regimes from different authors make it difficult for the reader, as a practising physician looking for new guidance.

Much of the chapter on basic insulin management should not be needed in 2005, but that on subcutaneous insulin infusion was welcome and up to date. The nutritional chapter would have benefited from discussion of present recommendations for 'dose adjustment for eating' regimens.

The two chapters on quality management and sports and physical activity were welcome as new initiatives. They contain useful thoughts and references for the new reader on these subjects.

The review of the effect of puberty on diabetes was well covered. Then followed some excellent chapters on the problems of nephropathy, neuropathy, macrovascular disease, hypoglycaemia and retinopathy. These provide a comprehensive review of current knowledge of childhood and adolescent complications in these respective fields.

The short chapter on type 2 diabetes had nine authors. Did they all play a major part in its content?

The book ended with a glimpse of things developing in the wings, e.g. islet transplantation and gene therapy—subjects on which so many affected families are crying out for further informed advice.

Overall this is a book that's worth reading and having available, bringing the reader right up to date on the many aspects of this ever increasing condition. The chapters are well referenced and there is something for everyone within the book's covers.

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