

BOOK REVIEW

Pediatrics in Developing Tropical Countries. The late S.T. ACHAR. Edited by J. Viswanathan. *Orient Longman*, Bombay and other places, 1973. pp 688. Price Rs. 26.00.

Dr. J. Viswanathan deserves our appreciation and gratitude for fulfilling the long cherished dream of the late Dr. S.T. Achar in compiling and editing his manuscripts to produce the first Indian textbook exclusively devoted to pediatrics. The emphasis throughout is on clinical and bedside pediatrics and tables have been effectively used to show differences between marasmus and dehydration, nephrosis and nephritis, chickenpox, and smallpox and many other clinically baffling and similar conditions. As expected, in view of the interest and personal involvement of Dr. S.T. Achar, the chapters on Growth and Development, Nutrition, Tuberculosis, Indian Childhood Cirrhosis, Allergy and Diarrhoeal Disorders are particularly good.

The anticipated personal bias of a single author book is evident at many places. For example, diluted cow's milk is recommended during the first 5 months of life, boat shaped feeding bottles preferred over soxhlet ones, advice to use mydrindon to prevent vomiting of pertussis and the claim of excellent results with splenectomy in thalassemia major etc. Infections have not been listed as a cause of neonatal mortality (P.11). The choice of antibiotics in general and lack of conformity to the metric system in expressing dosages

is confusing. Tetracyclines have been recommended for situations where ampicillin can be more usefully employed and they have been listed as the second best alternative for streptococcal pharyngitis in case the patient is sensitive to penicillin. In table 84, Kanamycin has been recommended for pyocyanus meningitis. The presentation of 4 tables on immunizations (p.266-268) renders the schedules ambiguous.

The Editor has striven to update the book but his failure is striking at many places. There is no mention of anti-D serum for prophylaxis against Rh hamolytic disease of the newborn, phototherapy and luminal for management of neonatal jaundice, IgM and Au antigen as a diagnostic aid for intrauterine infection and viral hepatitis respectively, gentamicin for neonatal sepsis and spontaneous closure of V.S.D. etc.

The print is rather small and there are quite a few typographical errors. Many of the illustrations are poor (e.g. Figs. 40, 55, 61, 73). Many unconventional abbreviations have been used, viz. I.C.P., P.D.S., E.B.F., C.O.A. etc.

Though there is need for improvement in future editions the book is replete with useful information and deals in detail with problems peculiar to tropical countries and is reasonably priced. It is recommended to undergraduate medical students and general practitioners.

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