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CARE OF THE NEWBORN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

G. J. EBRAHIM

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To my wife

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Preface

This book first appeared under the title 'The Newborn in Tropical Africa'. On the advice of many colleagues, I have expanded the text to discuss the general principles of newborn care in the context of the special circumstances of the developing countries.

The book grew out of notes for reference and personal use made by me, first when serving as a single-handed paediatrician in Dar-es-Salaam, and lately as tutor to the WHO/UNICEF sponsored Course for Senior Teachers of Child Health. In the latter capacity I was able to study perinatal problems in the rural areas of several countries. Even though the diseases of the neonatal period are not markedly different in the developing countries, the approach to a particular problem and methods of care may be different — as in the case of the low birth weight baby or in infant feeding, to take just two examples.

Teaching of medical students and auxiliaries is a special challenge. Many of them will have to work in remote areas with very little equipment and poor facilities. Hence the emphasis in teaching has to be on local needs, simple diagnostic reasoning and practical regimes of management and therapy. Teachers from several institutions of medical training have sent helpful comments and suggestions which have been incorporated in the book. In addition many colleagues working on their own in remote rural areas with little access to medical libraries have written to say that they found the previous edition useful. It is my hope that the present edition will continue to serve this useful purpose not only in countries of tropical Africa but also on a wider scale in other parts of the developing world.

Several individuals have given help in the preparation of the book; to all of them I am grateful, and especially to Dr. Alan Murdock, of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, and to Dr. Edison Altamirano of Universidad Central del Ecuador. My wife has edited the text and corrected flaws in the manuscript in the various stages of its preparation. Without such help and lively criticism the text would not be very readable.

If the book achieves its objective of helping to standardise the care of the newborn in developing countries, all of us who have been involved in its preparation will feel that our labours have been rewarded.

Care of the Newborn in Developing Countries is one of five volumes intended for health centre personnel. Each volume is aimed at specific members of the health team, and *Care of the Newborn* is intended for the midwife and the 'doctor' in the team.

G.J. EBRAHIM