
Book Reviews

Problem Based Approach in Paediatric Surgery. Ed. PLNG Rao, Jaypee Brothers Pvt. Limited 1998, pp 147, Rs. 500/-

For many pediatricians, pediatric surgery is alien territory, formidable and forbidding. Especially for a newborn baby, there is a feeling of foreboding when it is transferred to the unknown world of the pediatric surgery department. Of course, the pediatric surgeon usually does her/his best to reassure us, explaining the X-rays and going over the surgical plan and prognosis with us and the parents. We nod knowingly and mumble our agreement, but the whole exercise is somewhat bewildering, and there is a lurking fear that we will never see the baby alive again.

Given this scenario, this book will be welcomed by pediatricians, because it helps to demystify pediatric surgery and makes it easier to understand - in terms and phrases that we are conversant with. A pediatrician may not be familiar with the nuances of Ladd's operation or genital reconstruction, but she/he is an expert on bilious vomiting and ambiguous genitalia. A glance through the table of contents tells us that this author speaks our language. The chapter titles use familiar words and phrases like, "vomiting", "respiratory distress", "abdominal mass" and "chronic constipation".

Problem-based learning is part of the new jargon in medical education, but it is

also the time honored way of teaching on rounds and bedside clinics. The newly admitted child is discussed with students and residents, starting with symptoms and proceeding to the physical examination, investigations and treatment, pausing along the way to discuss and rediscuss the differential diagnosis. This is the approach to the book. Postgraduate students who read around their cases, will find themselves well armed for rounds the next morning, when questioned about their patients.

Dr. Rao has described 25 problems of everyday relevance to pediatricians and general practitioners. The book is well-illustrated with color plates, x-rays and scans. The 242 illustrations include 181 color and 61 black and white pictures. The tables and algorithms supplement the text in a comprehensible manner. The size is handy and the binding is strong. The paper quality and printing are excellent. Indian medical publishing is coming of age and the publishers are to be commended.

This book will be useful for everyday reference to a wide audience: undergraduate and postgraduate students, pediatricians, general practitioners, general surgeons and pediatric surgeons. A first of its kind in India, it will enhance the quality of our practice.

G.G. Christo,
Professor of Pediatrics,
Kasturba Medical College,
Manipal 576 119.

Poisoning in Children. Eds. *Utpal Kant Singh, F.C. Layland, Sanjay Suman and Rajniti Prasad.* Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 1998, Pages 173, Price Rs. 100/-

Poisoning remains an important cause of morbidity and mortality in children for the past several decades. However, enough importance is not given to this subject in the teaching curriculums. Thus, it is not unusual to see clinicians and residents often being unsure about how to handle a case of poisoning in an emergency situation. The problem is further compounded by the fact that there are large number of poisonous substances and chemicals which are in use and often kept at home. Medicines with attractive color, packing and taste are also stored within easy reach of the children. With evolving sociocultural practices the pattern of poisoning is also changing. Prompt diagnosis and appropriate therapy are vital for survival in childhood poisonings. Thus, a book on poisoning in children, which is practical, reasonably exhaustive and yet handy, has been a longfelt need. The Editors have done well in selecting the sections in this book carefully.

The first three chapters list the common poisons, their identification on the basis of signs and symptoms and initial general management. This will be useful even for pediatric intensive care set ups. Chapters on animal poisonings and radioactive hazards are well conceived and testimony to authors desire to include as many sections as possible in this book. Key points for diagnosis and management is an innovation, which a busy, practitioner will find very useful. A list of antidotes has also been provided in a tabular form. Each section provides a list of bibliography that has made the text authoritative. It is obvious that a lot of care has been taken in editing and proof reading. However, it is hoped that, certain glaring mistakes like mg in place of meg for serum iron level will be rectified in subsequent editions. Suffixing the word oil after kerosene is also technically not correct. The book is reasonably priced, easy reading and recommended specially for all residents and clinicians.-

Panna Choudhury,
Senior Pediatrician,
Department of Pediatrics,
Lok Nayak Hospital,
New Delhi 110 002.