Recent Advances in Pædiatric Surgery

Edited by A. W. WILKINSON. Pp. ix + 306, illustrated. London: J. & A. Churchill. 1963. 50s.

A book on Pædiatric Surgery claiming to cover the advances of the last decade should present the growing edge of pædiatric surgery to its readers. This the book, in part, fails to do.

The section on anæsthetics contains this statement. "The equipment available for monitoring a child's condition . . . is unreliable. Mechanical recordings of blood pressure and pulse rates require constant checking to confirm the accuracy of the apparatus and a stethoscope strapped to the child's chest is more reliable". There are reliable instruments for monitoring the pulse, the temperature, the blood, and the E.C.G., in neouates in daily use in London.

Many of the sections such as those on plastic surgery, the nose, and burns may be good reviews of their respective subjects but this book is not one of review articles, nor is it a treatise on pædiatric surgery. It is concerned with recent advances. If all knowledge over ten years old were deleted from the above sections, little would remain. The articles are not orientated sufficiently to the title of this work.

The liver, apart from neoplasia, receives no mention. Needle biopsy of the liver and the surgical treatment of neonatal jaundice and portocaval shunts, among other things are omitted.

The section in otology draws attention to the very real dangers of deafness following the administration of antibiotics and mentions di-hydro-streptomycin by name. It states "Clinicians are sometimes slow to realise the similar dangers of some of the newer antibiotics". Would it not have been useful to give a list of the antibiotics that do or are thought to produce deafness and thus to be avoided and also to tabulate the safe substitutes for them?

The treatment of Hirschsprung's Disease is well presented and the section on ureteric surgery gives a good review of this subject. The author on the chapter on cardiovascular surgery is obviously versed in the recent literature and techniques of his subject.

Fig. 1 on page 107 is not clear and would be helped if a little line diagram were inserted to help to illustrate what the radiograph purports to show. The chapter on hydrocephalus based on a personal series of two hundred patients is authoritative and informative.

The growing importance and use of electronics in surgery, the help provided by modern radiological techniques and ultra-microscopic biochemical analyses are among many of the subjects we think might have been mentioned in this book.

Lysosomes
Ciba Foundation Symposium

Edited by A. V. S. de REUCK and MARGARET P. CAMERON. Pp. xii + 446 illustrated. London: J. & A. Churchill. 1963. 60s.

In 1955 de Duve first proposed the name 'lysosome' when he discovered that many acid hydrolases were associated together in the cell in a special group of cytoplasmic particles. Since then knowledge of intracellular organisation has increased considerably and a Ciba Foundation Symposium has now been held on the subject lysosomes alone. Appropriately enough the opening paper is by Professor de Duve, who summarises the present ideas on the concept of lysosomes as bags of acid hydrolases and on their functions.

The Symposium was divided into four main sections. The first on general properties of lysosomes includes papers on the contribution of enzyme staining techniques, and observations on the distribution of these subcellular particles. The second section is entitled 'Lysosomes and Endocytosis' and includes discussions on lysosomes in relation to phagocytosis, and digestion of ingested foreign matter. There is a section on the role of lysosomes in developmental processes, and finally one on their function in pathological cell damage.

Like all Ciba Foundation Symposia this is a well produced volume. The subject matter will be of interest both to experts in the field, and to those who wish to find out more about this expanding subject.

Tuberculosis in Children

F. J. W. MILLAR; R. M. E. SEAL and M. D. TAYLOR. Pp. xii + 615 illustrated. London: J. & A. Churchill. 1963. 120s.

Every student of tuberculosis will welcome this book which, in addition to being a comprehensive text book, is a summary of the advances made in childhood tuberculosis since adequate chemotherapy and preventative vaccination became available.

It is written from practical experience in the prevention and treatment of the disease, and almost every important contribution to this work which has been published for the past fifteen years is included. There are over 480 references to recent published works so it is a treasury of information.

It is clearly written and includes the whole subject from prevention to the dosages of chemotherapy suitable to each form of childhood tuberculosis. Much work has been put into it and it deserves to have a place in all public health departments. It is cheap because it is a digest of all that is known of childhood tuberculosis.

The tablets giving the incidence of glandular complications following B. C. G. vaccination are compiled from an assessment of children vaccinated between 1951-1955. Since 1955 the Danish vaccine has been reduced to half strength and the incidence of such complications has been much lower in recent years. This would require to be brought up to date.

The chapter on congential tuberculosis is of particular interest and importance. It is shown that these cases which have been generally regarded as hopeless are curable. This is a stimulating chapter which gives new hope and will alert readers to the watchful diagnosis of these cases.

There is a remarkably good diagram on the natural history of untreated primary infection.

The authors give their reasons for suggesting that B.C.G. vaccination should be given at eleven years of age when children enter secondary school, and that vaccination should not be deferred until thirteen years of age. This suggestion is well worth attention.

Though the book is of special importance to the public health service, it is recommended as profitable reading to all concerned with tuberculosis in children. Four simple keys are given—the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and a key to the future.