

Book reviews

and includes chapters on the causes and classification of perinatal death, performance of a perinatal autopsy, and an approach to malformation syndromes before moving on to the systemic pathology of perinatal disease. All of these are concise and written in an engaging style. The reader is referred to more specialised works for fine detail.

Perinatal autopsies may be the only exposure of many pathologists to paediatric conditions. Many of them will already have books on paediatric pathology and diseases of the placenta. That should not stop them buying this one.

D LOWE

Disorders of Fluid and Electrolyte Balance. RN Walmsley and MD Guerin. (Pp 275; £7.95.) John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1984.

This book, which covers more than its title might imply, presents a didactic but logical approach to commonly encountered derangements of body fluid, electrolyte, and acid-base status, the major exceptions being those seen in paediatrics, dialysis, and parenteral nutrition. After describing normal homeostasis it discusses the abnormalities seen in disease in terms of disturbed physiology and offers a practical approach to the evaluation of the laboratory findings and treatment. The wealth of clinical experience of the Australian authors is reflected in the numerous case reports which are quoted to illustrate the patterns of laboratory findings and the problems that arise in interpreting them.

Being a relatively compact book covering a large area the text reduces to note form in places, so the reader must be prepared to think as he reads. However, its sound, practical, and up to date approach to subjects that many find difficult make it attractive, and I confidently recommend it as rewarding reading to medical students, clinicians, and chemical pathologists who want to have a better understanding of the biochemical abnormalities seen in so many patients. It is well produced, has a useful index, and will undoubtedly be much used wherever it is made available.

FV FLYNN

Mechanisms of Alcohol Damage in utero. Ciba Foundation Symposium 105. (Pp 296; £26.50.) The Ciba Foundation. 1984.

This book contains the proceedings of a recent Ciba Foundation Symposium concerned with the clinico-pathological aspects of the fetal alcohol syndrome and the biological basis of ethanol toxicity.

The clinical picture of the fetal alcohol syndrome is well recognised although reports of UK cases only emerged recently as 1982. The follow-up study from West Berlin was therefore of particular interest: the dysmorphic features appear to regress, neurophysiological abnormalities improve, but the children perform poorly at school due to hyperactivity and distractibility. Numerically, lesser degrees of ethanol toxicity are more important and it has been suggested that up to 10% of all children with mild mental retardation are due to maternal alcoholism.

Side by side with these important psycho-sociological reports are results of basic neuropathological and biochemical studies of ethanol toxicity. Trace metals, immunological mechanisms, nutritional factors, neuroendocrine aspects, and synergism with smoking are all considered in detail. Several potential animal models were considered and results from these experiments related to the human disorder. The epidemiological and preventative aspects of the syndrome were fully aired.

Each chapter is a gem and this book is undoubtedly the definitive current work in this area. It is highly recommended.

TJ PETERS

Medical Microbiology. Vol 1. Ed CSF Easmon and J Jeljaszewicz. (Pp 462; £32.) Academic Press. 1982.

This is the first of an "open-ended series of major review articles... of interest to medical microbiologists and their veterinary colleagues". The present volume consists of papers chosen for their topicality and general interest, with no particular theme. The eleven subjects are as diverse as antibiotic-associated colitis, contagious equine metritis, legionellosis, and immunostimulatory and antineoplastic activities of propionibacteria.

The first reaction of a reviewer to this daunting task was to read the first of these reviews with much interest and then to put the book down. Various colleagues then took up the assignment and individually reported in terms that ranged from admirable to disappointing. It often happens that a wide-ranging enterprise produces a range of quality and an uneasy mixture of general excellence and personal bias that defeats the best of editors.

There is much useful information in this book, but it is an expensive volume; a specialist reader is unlikely to be tempted

to pay this price for a limited number of chapters in such a mixture. Perhaps the editors and publishers will be more successful with a series related to a common theme.

JG COLLEE

Pathology of the Colon, Small Intestine, and Anus. Ed H Thomas Norris. Contemporary Issues in Surgical Pathology. Vol 2. (Pp 338; £37.) Churchill Livingstone. 1983.

This compact volume is packed with valuable information for the diagnostic histopathologist with excellent chapters on the differential diagnosis of inflammatory bowel disease and a detailed appraisal of low-grade and high-grade dysplasia in rectal biopsies. Clinical relevance is taken into account since the term "Fulminant Colitis" is preferred to that of "Toxic Megacolon" and the difficulty in discriminating between ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease in this stage is openly acknowledged. There is a gratifying account of the interpretation of jejunal biopsies in malabsorption syndromes enhanced by appropriate illustrations. The distinguished list of contributors clarify each topic and provide reference lists which corroborate their views and stimulate further reading. Close attention to technique is emphasised throughout the text and the illustrations support this contention. It was refreshing to read such an up to date account from our American colleagues and I strongly recommend it to all pathologists who report intestinal specimens.

H THOMPSON

Latent Dyslipoproteinemias and Atherosclerosis. Ed JL de Gennes, J Polonovski, and R Paoletti. (Pp 334; \$52.50.) Raven Press. 1983.

The definition of hyperlipidaemia is a source of considerable difficulty because of the continuous relationship between lipid levels and risk of coronary heart disease. The problem is made more difficult by the recognition dealt with in this book that abnormalities of lipid transport in plasma, without conspicuous hyperlipidaemia, appear to influence the risk of cardiovascular disease. This volume is a conference report including discussions of familial high density lipoprotein deficiency and hyperapobetalipoproteinaemia. There are also reviews of the subclasses of the familiar lipoprotein entities, low density lipoprotein, and high density lipoprotein. Among the most valuable contributions are reviews