

Editors' foreword

This symposium is the fifth of the series 'Chemical pathology in relation to clinical medicine' organized by the Chemical Pathology Committee of the Association of Clinical Pathologists. Its subject, disorders of carbohydrate metabolism, covers a wide field as the contents list shows, and these proceedings should be of interest to anyone concerned with metabolic medicine whether as general physician, paediatrician, pathologist, or clinical biochemist.

There were some lively discussions, and as these have not been reported one important conclusion should be recorded here. It was generally agreed that congenital disorders of carbohydrate metabolism were often missed in infancy, sometimes with serious results, and that these conditions should be sought more diligently, especially when an infant has an enlarged liver which could be due, for instance, to glycogen storage disease, to galactosaemia, or to hereditary fructose intolerance. Diagnosis of the first of these requires a high index of suspicion together with special investigations, but the other two can generally be detected without difficulty provided that the urine is examined on several occasions while the infant is on its normal diet, and provided that routine testing for sugar is always carried out by a method which detects any reducing sugar (Benedict's, Clinitest) and *not by a strip test dependent on glucose oxidase (Clinistix) which detects only glucose*. In at least one instance nursing staff of a children's hospital are known to have changed their routine test from Clinitest to Clinistix without the knowledge of the medical staff, and precautions should be taken against such a possibility.

In his introduction the Chairman has expressed the thanks of the ACP to the speakers and organizers of this symposium, and we should like to take this opportunity of thanking Professor Thompson himself for taking the chair and for helping with the organization. Last but not least we thank the British Medical Association and the editorial staff of the *Journal of Clinical Pathology* for their help in publishing these proceedings.

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