
BOOK REVIEWS

PAEDIATRIC PROBLEMS IN TROPICAL COUNTRIES

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THIS IS THE first paediatric textbook written in Malaysia for the undergraduate medical student, the paediatric medical officer and those doctors concerned with primary child health care in developing countries. In most medical schools the total paediatric curriculum for medical students covers only about 12-16 weeks in a medical school. Hence it is essentially important that students should be able to depend on a textbook in paediatrics which has material expressed in a problem orientated manner. Here at last is a textbook of 52 chapters which I believe fills the gap for any undergraduate and postgraduate student. The emphasis has been on making a correct diagnosis after taking a careful history and performing a thorough physical examination.

The opening chapter on community paediatrics emphasizes the vital role that paediatricians and primary child health care workers have to play in identifying with the rural health programme and the preventive paediatric measures that can reduce the infant mortality rate. I am happy to see that besides the well documented chapters on low birth weight, jaundice, infections, infant feeding, vomiting and malabsorption, there is a chapter on the child and the family. This again is important as behaviour problems in children present as paediatric problems for the general practitioner and the paediatric doctor. The theoretical and practical aspects of disturbances of fluid and electrolyte metabolism have been explained with clarity. This chapter will be very useful to the young doctor and a good refresher for the continuing paediatric postgraduate doctor.

The chapters on clinical genetics, aspects of growth, and ambiguous genitalia, will strengthen the students endocrine knowledge and provide a

new dimension on special problems in paediatrics. The emphasis on an early detection of handicapping conditions such as hypotonia, mental retardation, spastic, visual and hearing defects, speech and learning disorders is stressed in this book and the question of early rehabilitation of these handicapping conditions is important to the medical student. The chapter on practical procedures of infancy and childhood is carefully written with sensible logical sequence and a chapter that most paediatricians would want to refer to in their daily routine work.

Finally a Bahasa Malaysia translation of this paediatric textbook should be an urgent early consideration for future medical, science, and agricultural students and even the nursing professions in undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

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Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London and New York, 1978, pp. 349.

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