

family planning is no exception. It is more a book for the medical student or examinee than for the average general practitioner.

The chapter on the Pill deals at length with the many pills available, but fails to draw attention to the very real advantages of the low oestrogen pills, which are, or should be, cornering the market. Also, in this chapter there is vague advice on the subject of the two-yearly break, which some doctors still advocate. The reviewer was most interested in the repeated suggestion that pyridoxine might be the answer to some patients' problems of lassitude and depression.

The chapter on IUDs is a model of its kind: there is an excellent account of how to insert one, including the often omitted advice to use a vusellum to steady and straighten the canal. Few doctors today, however, ask their patients or their husbands or boy friends to sign consent forms when fitting IUDs.

Because family planning is a rapidly changing subject it is difficult for such a book to be up to date. Already there are more new contraceptive pills on the market. The 'Progestasert' has arrived on the IUD scene and the 'Dalkon' shield has been completely withdrawn. With these exceptions, however, all the latest information is gathered together and well presented.

In general, this is an excellent, up-to-date account of family planning, although this particular reviewer would prefer a little more meat in his diet.

J. K. LLOYD

## HYPERTENSION AND STROKE CONTROL IN THE COMMUNITY

S. Hatano, I. Shigematsu & T. Strasser

WHO, Geneva (1976)

Swiss francs 30, US \$12, £6.90

This is a report of a WHO meeting in Tokyo in 1974, attended by 58 delegates, two thirds of them Japanese. One delegate worked in a health centre and four in industrial medical services providing some primary care. All the rest were hospital specialists, epidemiologists, or full-time researchers.

Japan has an incidence of stroke roughly double that in Britain and the

USA and four times that of Sweden. It starts much younger: Japanese men have the same incidence of stroke at 40 as the British do at 75. Although hypertension is closely (and causally) related to haemorrhagic stroke, and rather less so to atherothrombotic stroke, there is no evidence that the Japanese have higher average arterial pressures, or more people with high pressures, than we do. Clearly there are other factors involved, which are ultimately social, though probably concerned with diet. As in all countries with rising standards of living, the incidence of stroke in Japan is falling, and is higher in the poor than in the well-to-do (there is a large social class gradient in the same direction in Britain, little studied and wholly unexplained). Japan shows much higher rates in the countryside than in the towns, which is interesting, since average serum cholesterol levels are lower in country-dwellers. For those interested in these fundamental questions, this book brings together a good deal of international evidence, although there are no startling developments. The review by J. Richard is particularly helpful.

As might be expected from the composition of the conference, little was said about the practical means of putting its conclusions into effect. There is one good paper that discusses delivery and compliance problems seriously in a genuine community context, and the author shows real evidence of an effort to tackle them and measure the results. However, it appears to have led to little discussion.

Perhaps the next WHO conference on hypertension control will put an end to interminable lip-service to the importance of primary care, and give it some serious representation. Until that happens, we shall continue to accumulate and learnedly discuss knowledge that is not applied. There is little evidence here that such a dawn is either anticipated or desired.

JULIAN TUDOR HART

## PROBLEMS OF CHILDHOOD

S. Lock (ed.)

British Medical Association, London (1976)

149 pages. Price £2.50, US \$6.25

This is a small book published by the

British Medical Association from a collection of articles which appeared in the *British Medical Journal* early in 1976. The essays cover a wide range of problems including acute and physical disorders of childhood as well as psychological and behavioural problems. The subject matter ranges from constipation to squints and for the most part the essays are clearly written and logically presented.

In some ways, the beginning of the book is more rewarding than its later chapters because of a very good introductory chapter by Roy Meadow of Leeds, called "Consultation, Diagnosis and Management". This gives several practical tips for managing the young patient, followed by a reasonable and sensible review by D. P. Addy of Birmingham, of what can be an emotive subject—infant feeding. Paediatricians from Bristol and Birmingham follow with a good article on bottle feeding. Two other outstanding articles are: "Febrile Fits", by Sheila Wallace of Cardiff, and "Squints" by Brian Harcourt of Leeds.

Of course one can carp. The article on wheezy children by J. K. Sarsfield of Harrogate is the one most likely to upset the general practitioner. It states that asthma is the most common cause of wheezing and quotes in evidence the article which appeared in the *British Medical Journal* in 1969 by H. Williams and K. McNicol from Australia. In this follow-up of wheezy children the first year of life was not included, so that their evidence is in direct contradistinction to Fry's statement that, in his experience, only 7.7 per cent of wheezy babies go on to become asthmatics. Family doctors will know which is the more likely statement. It is also asserted that most asthmatic children have demonstrable allergies. While this may be true of hospital practice it is unlikely to be the case in community paediatrics. In the paper on disorders of micturition, Roy Meadow seems unaware that most general practitioners have direct access to IVPs and other investigations without having recourse to the paediatrician.

This is a book which is not expensive and on the whole represents value for money in that current thinking on a variety of paediatric problems is lucidly presented. As a paperback it is unlikely to be available in medical libraries and will need to be bought.

MARGARET POLLAK