



HEALTH FOR ALL CHILDREN

A programme for child health surveillance

David M.B. Hall

Oxford University Press (1989)

134 pages. Price £5.95

This is the report of a joint working party on child health surveillance, with members from the British Paediatric Association, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the General Medical Services Committee of the British Medical Association, the Health Visitor's Association and the Royal College of Nursing. It sets out to offer a critical analysis of the existing schemes of child health surveillance, and assesses the value of such schemes as well as considering the importance of health promotion and health education.

Health for all children actively promotes the important role of the parent in the recognition of problems in the child, and may well upset many doctors and health visitors, as it suggests a much reduced role for them. However, the end of procedures such as the routine weighing of children after the first year of life may not be a great loss.

The report reviews routine screening for visual defects and hearing impairment, and produces an excellent summary of the knowledge and skills required for anyone carrying out routine child surveillance. At the end of the book there is a concise guide to the recommended screening procedures, as well as a list of references.

The book is well written and easy to follow. It is essential reading for anyone involved in child surveillance, and I would recommend it to all general practitioners and trainees.

D.W. HOLTON

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IMMUNIZING CHILDREN

Practical guides for general practice no. 8

Sue Sefi and Aidan MacFarlane

Oxford University Press (1989)

40 pages. Price £4.50

This booklet sets out to provide clear definitive information for parents and health workers which is compatible with Department of Health guidelines on childhood immunization. It achieves this aim by providing summarized information on the epidemiology and vaccine strategy for the infectious diseases concerned, complemented by easily assimilated listings of the facts which must be kept in mind in the administration of vaccines.

In order to remove the doubts which can leave vulnerable children unimmunized, sections are included on dealing with the comments of undecided parents and common problems

which health professionals meet in the course of immunization.

A text of this size could not be expected to answer all the less common questions, but I was left wondering why so much more was written on tuberculosis for which few general practitioners administer bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine, than on mumps when a major vaccination drive with the new measles, mumps and rubella vaccine is in progress. It would have been helpful to emphasize the significance of achieving at least 90% vaccine uptake to avoid a shift of infection to older age groups.

The place for this booklet is in every immunization clinic. There are other new immunization texts for the practice bookshelf.

MURIEL BERKELEY

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University of Aberdeen*

SMALLPOX IS DEAD

Arnold Sanderson

Farrand Press, London (1989)

29 pages. Price £5.95

We ignore the past at our peril, especially in these days when medical research is dominated by high technology. In the second century AD Arateus described coeliac disease and defined its cause as the 'eating of farinaceous foods'. Two hundred years ago Edward Jenner discovered the first vaccine and how to make and use it. Ultimately, this has enabled us to rid the world of smallpox. Jenner was a country general practitioner; his laboratory was his practice.

Smallpox is dead tells in simple language the story of the development of the smallpox vaccine and the elimination of the disease from the world. While it is targeted at children, it has an important message for doctors. Mass vaccination has enabled us to rid the world of this scourge. What about rubella? How long have we taken to develop a similar strategy?

Practice libraries for patients are now growing rapidly and this book would be a valuable addition.

COLIN WAINE

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of General Practitioners*

HANDBOOK OF PAEDIATRICS

Nicholas P. Mann and Angus Nicoll

Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford (1989)

357 pages. Price £12.50

This book is targeted to the needs of those who are inexperienced in the medical care of sick children. The initial sections on clinical method, growth and developmental paediatrics are ex-