Book reviews

Childhood Headache
ISBN: 1 89868526 3 (Hardback)

*Childhood Headache*, edited by Dr Ishaq Abu-Arafeh, is a 200-page textbook summarizing recent research into and clinical management of pediatric headache and migraine. Half of its 14 chapters were authored or co-authored by the editor. The book is self-advertized as a ‘comprehensive review’ and ‘reference book’ on the subject of pediatric headache.

The text starts with several short chapters, written mostly by the editor, concentrating on the basic mechanisms of pain, epidemiology, genetics, and pathophysiology of migraine. These chapters are thorough, emphasizing the current theories as well as the uncertainty about these disorders. The next six chapters delve into diagnostic criteria relating to children, headache syndromes, and other causes of headache in children besides migraine. Some of these chapters are a bit long, but generally useful to a pediatrician or a child neurologist new to the field faced with a child presenting with headache. The final three chapters cover the therapy for migraine.

The book is generally well-written and thought out. The selection of authors from both sides of the Atlantic is superb, and the choices of chapters for each individual writer appropriate. Chapters are appropriately succinct, but dense in useful information, with up to 100 references each. Most sections are quite readable and enjoyable, particularly the reviews of diagnostic criteria for migraine by Dr Rothner, and psychological therapy by Dr Osterhaus.

The major flaw of this book is the relative dearth of information on therapy for migraine. Granted, little research into migraine management in the pediatric population has been conducted. However, the single chapter on therapy (12 pages only) leaves out any recommendations regarding new triptans or even prophylactic therapies beyond basic agents such as propranolol, valproate, and amitryptiline. This is in sharp contrast to the 25-page chapter on psychological therapy. Case presentations are only briefly discussed by some of the authors and would have been useful learning experiences.

In summary, *Childhood Headache* is a useful, thorough reference textbook on the subject of pediatric headache and migraine, which is finally beginning to gain attention in the medical community. Although advertized as ‘invaluable to pediatric neurologists and general paediatricians, as well as to researchers’, the order should be reversed: the appeal is mainly to researchers. It is a nice complement to the recent book edited by Drs Guidetti, Russell, Sillanpaa, and Winner, *Headache and Migraine in Childhood and Adolescence* (Martin Dunitz 2002), a much more clinically-oriented text on the subject, albeit twice as long.

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Eric Kossoff

Overgrowth Syndromes
By Michael Cohen Jr, Giovanni Neri, Rosanna Weksberg
ISBN 0195117468 (Hardback)

This book examines the syndromes associated with large size, or overgrowth, from a genetic point of view. The book contains chapters on the better understood syndromes such as Beckwith-Weidemann syndrome, neurofibromatosis, and Sotos syndrome, with a brief overview of a very large range of extremely rare syndromes. The chapter on Proteus syndrome discusses the possible diagnosis in the ‘Elephant Man’, Joseph Merrick, as well as providing an extensive summary of the clinical and pathological findings in this disorder. As with many textbook pictures of children with genetic disorders, some of the photographs are clearly of the most extreme examples.

While these syndromes are mostly very rare, paediatricians in a number of clinical fields are often called on to assess children with large size and dysmorphic features. Faced with this clinical situation, the ideal must be to reach a named diagnosis, if possible, and to give some idea of the outcome and any problems (such as tumour risk) associated with the disorder. The lists of clinical features and a large number of pictures in this book will certainly be helpful in reaching a possible diagnosis. I am sure the content will be of value to geneticists, but would also be helpful in assessing whether a child should be referred to one.

The potential for tumour development in overgrowth disorders is covered in detail with an assessment of the risk, and a guide to follow-up. Current recommendations for screening are given for some disorders. The later chapters of the book discuss a large number of extremely rare syndromes. For most of these, only a few cases have been described and little clinical information is available. Each chapter has a comprehensive and valuable list of references.

This book will be of value in guiding investigations of children with overgrowth syndromes. However, it is of more value in making a diagnosis than in giving advice about future outcomes. I would have liked more detail on the growth patterns and long term outcome of the syndromes (although I realize that for many syndromes little is known). Although the disorders covered are all very rare, this is an interesting book which is easy to read. The book will be a useful reference tool, not only for those working in genetics but also for developmental paediatricians and those interested in child growth.

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Hyperactivity and Attention Disorders of Childhood, 2nd edition
Edited by Seija Sandberg
Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp 504, £44.95, US$65.00
ISBN 0 52178961 3 (Paperback)

With this second edition of the important review published in 1996, the editor undertakes the challenge to account for the recent advances in ADHD, in both children and young adults. The second edition not only presents thoroughly updated
reviews of the topics covered in the first edition, but contributes additional chapters on early institutional rearing, the adult form of the disorder and, most timely, the rapidly expanding field of genetic investigations into ADHD, or hyperkinetic disorders.

The clinical delineation of hyperactivity disorders is far from settled, adding to the inhomogeneities of the present volume, as well as the first. Nonetheless, important contributions, notably by van der Meer, add to the understanding of the psychological construct of the disorders as state disorders, rather than simply attentional deficits. Such state disorders clearly involve the executive system, needing frequent stimulation for proper functioning. It would be of considerable interest to expand the psychophysical studies to involve perceptory functions as well, and it is this reviewer’s guess that the symptomatology of hyperactivity disorders will then turn out to be even more complex.

The present volume allocates a good deal of attention to the potential influences of early caregiving to the pathogenesis of the disorders. Telling examples of the plight of Romanian orphans are given on this account. It also rightly stresses the point that the symptoms often persist into adulthood, with severe social and educational consequences.

Systematic and informative reviews of molecular genetic studies and pathophysiology are given by Waldman and Rhee, and by Castellanos and Swanson respectively. Strangely enough, the important contribution of preterm birth to pathogenesis is barely mentioned. This is unfortunate considering the much increased survival rate of preterm infants with their vulnerable homeostatic mechanisms, and high incidence rate of developmental disabilities such as hyperactivity disorders.

In spite of this major shortcoming, and a few less important ones, the present volume offers the best available comprehensive source of information on hyperactivity disorders, and will be of invaluable aid in clinical and scientific work.

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Hans C. Lou

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Disorders of Neuronal Migration
Edited by Peter G Barth
ISBN 1 898 68331 X
US$65.00 £45.00 pp215

Neuronal migration is a unique process during the development of brain structure. Although cerebral anomalies resulting from impaired migration have been known for nearly a century, most of our knowledge has accumulated in the last decade. Disorders of neuronal migration are causes of mental disability, autism, and epilepsy. Many are genetically determined and need precise diagnosis to provide genetic counselling. This book addresses the various aspects of neuronal migration disorders in an ordered way, intended to help the reader to acquire insight as well as proficiency in diagnosis. Individual chapters describe subgroups including lissencephalies, subependymal heterotopia, non-lissencephalic cortical dysplasias, anomalies of the corpus callosum, hemimegalencephaly, schizencephaly, polymicrogyria, and multisystem disorders with impaired migration such as chromosomal and metabolic syndromes. Neuroradiological and genetic data are provided with the respective chapters. Although the book is intended for clinical practice it provides core information for all interested in this important biological process.