

medical student with a basic knowledge and understanding of obstetrics, with special emphasis on early detection of high-risk pregnancies and deliveries, and on the management of obstetric emergency situations.

The book has a classic structure. A brief survey of morphology, physiology, and pathophysiology of gestation presents facts, or points of view regarded as facts, without critical notes. The part on the physiology of delivery and the puerperial period is written in a clear and factual style. The remaining 300-odd pages cover the pathology of pregnancy, delivery and puerperium, including chapters on perinatal medicine and the newborn, and a brief summary of operative obstetric techniques. Though these chapters read well, a closer look reveals a lack of integration between pathophysiology, clinical signs and symptoms, and therapeutic measures.

Again, critical notes on controversial points are hardly found. For example, the use of diuretics and antihypertensive drugs (p. 216) – diuretics even prophylactic until delivery (p. 217) – on an out-patient basis in cases of mild preeclampsia is a highly debatable issue, that should be discussed against the background of present knowledge of general and regional hemodynamics in this condition. And what is the medical student supposed to do with a table of prophylactic and therapeutic measures in chronic placental insufficiency (p. 414) when the possible etiology and pathogenetic mechanisms are just listed but not discussed at all?

The chapter on the newborn deals with the most common congenital malformations and chromosomal disorders, but none of the recessive autosomal or X-linked metabolic diseases are mentioned. Even more important, no mention is made of the possibility of prenatal diagnosis of a good many congenital disorders, and of genetic counseling, procedures of the existence of which every general physician should be aware.

Though a few names are strewn through the text as references, the book could use a list of literature or key references to incite the student to pore over certain matters in more depth.

In conclusion, it seems questionable whether this book in its present form can be of much help to the student 'on his way from learning to understanding', as it is hoped for in the preface. However, as part of a teaching program the book could be an aid for

the student on his way to the examination room. The German language will practically limit its use to students in Germany, and perhaps Holland and the Scandinavian countries.

H. C. S. Wallenburg, Rotterdam

Hormonale Behandlung von Zyklusstörungen
Ein Leitfaden für die Praxis

R. Kaiser

Georg Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart, 1975

(viii + 147 pp., 59 Figs., 1 Table)

DM 16.80

This paperback volume sets out guidelines, information and instructions to students who want to know more about menstrual disorders and their hormonal treatment. The author mentions LTH (prolactin) as a stimulator of the corpus luteum. Many investigators think that LH alone makes ovulation possible and can also stimulate the corpus luteum to make progesterone. The new drug anti-prolactin (2-Br-alpha-ergocryptine) is described as being useful in the amenorrhea-galactorrhea syndrome, stopping milk secretion post partum, and in the premenstrual syndrome. The dangers of synthetic estrogens without a steroid structure are not always emphasized. It is doubtful whether bilateral resection of the ovaries is still the method of choice for the treatment of the Stein-Leventhal syndrome. The antiandrogen cyproteroneacetate seems to have good results and is a method of treatment for several diagnoses.

This volume seems to offer an answer for the treatment of many complaints of women in childhood, and of reproductive and postmenopausal age. In practice this proves to be more difficult. Though this paperback is up-to-date, it has indeed all the disadvantages of a paperback: too many therapies in too few words, without sufficient background. But students nowadays dislike textbooks not only for financial reasons.

P. G. Hart, Utrecht

Neurological Complications of Oral Contraceptives

Edwin R. Bickerstaff (ed.)

Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975

(viii + 107 pp.)

£4. –