British Journal of Nutrition (2003), **89**, 841–845

Book reviews

V. Preedy, G. Grimble and R. Watson (editors). *Nutrition in the Infant: Problems and Practical Procedures*. London: Greenwich Medical Media Ltd 2001. £85.00. pp. 464. ISBN 1900151636

There is something of value in this book for many different kinds of people and because of this, it is a difficult book to review satisfactorily. It comprises thirty-nine relatively short but informative chapters written by thirty-three first authors, mainly from the UK and USA, but also from several European countries, Canada and from others further afield. Many of the authors are international experts in their respective specialities and their work has been combined to address a great many nutritional topics of relevance to the infant. As the book title suggests, subjects are addressed from the practical viewpoint of how the reader detects, measures and controls nutritional problems, or how the physician or society at large address specific nutritional issues. The chapters are somewhat loosely assembled but the editors have attempted to present subjects in the following order: anthropometry, feeding disorders and the use of enteral, parenteral and other invasive methods, infant requirements for trace elements, iron, essential fatty acids, dietary fibre, antioxidants, vitamins and the use of food fortification to address some of the major nutritional deficiencies; and a series of chapters looking at nutrition in specific circumstances, for example critical illness, HIV, diabetes, Crohn's disease, cystic fibrosis etc. The book ends with chapters on obesity, failure to thrive and three chapters on feeding the normal infant in which the relative importance of breast and formula feeding and of colonic fermentation for infant development are discussed.

In a book with so many authors and such a variety of subjects, it would not be surprising to find a great many styles of writing or inconsistencies in terminology and approach to the different subjects. There are some; mass units continue to be used by some authors even though molar units have been internationally accepted as units of preference for several decades now. In general, however, the editors have imposed a consistent style that is used effectively throughout the book. Each chapter begins with a short introduction to put each topic into context. It is usually followed by a historical section of variable length but the main emphasis of all the chapters is provided in the section on Practice and Procedures. Cross-references between chapters are provided where appropriate. Each chapter ends with a Discussion, but this would have been better called 'Conclusions'. All chapters are satisfactorily referenced and a useful subject index is provided at the end of the book.

The emphasis of the topics covered is primarily on problems of infants in the developed world. Nevertheless, the book opens with two chapters on protein energy metabolism (PEM) and there are very informative chapters on nutritional screening during emergencies and the use of oral rehydration solutions. Much of what is written on PEM is now widely practiced protocol but the nature of the condition means that it is often treated under conditions that are far from ideal and many questions concerning treatment still exist. Handling PEM is as relevant today is as it ever was, particularly with the resurgence in many parts of the developing world of many of the older tropical diseases as well as new ones like HIV. However, it would not be appropriate and I certainly do not have the space to discuss the merits of each chapter. Anyone who deals with or plans to deal with child nutrition will find useful information in this book: whether it is in the management of the acutely ill premature infant or community nutritional programmes; handling the psychological problems of self-induced illness (Munchausen's syndrome) or the problems posed by food intolerance; handling nutrition in the child with disabilities and the problems posed by obesity; the problems posed by liver disease, Crohn's disease, HIV, gastrointestinal resection etc.

For a student, this book is not cheap at £85 but, in the context of today's prices, the book is reasonably priced as it will serve as a useful guide on nutritional practice for students and teachers in many specialities and provide a valuable reference manual for libraries as well as individuals in the different clinical, biomedical and anthropological professions.

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DOI: 10.1079/BJN2002771

Gerald Wiseman. *Nutrition & Health*. London: Taylor & Francis 2002. £12.99. pp. 198. ISBN 0-145-27874-0

This book aims to introduce the role of the human diet in maintaining a healthy body and preventing disease. This is an ambitious task for such a small book (198 pages), resulting in a book that covers a broad range of topics with little detail. Set out in forty-eight self-contained chapters, this book is easy to dip into and out of. It covers nutrition throughout life from pregnancy, lactation and infancy through to ageing. Then, there is a section on some food-related disorders (illness, anorexia nervosa and bulimia, obesity and weight control), and a section on food science topics (food labelling, food additives, food-borne illness)

including an interesting chapter on food toxicity and a useful chapter incorporating basic food hygiene entitled 'avoiding food-borne illness'. Next, there is food intolerance and allergy before looking at basic nutrition (macro- and micronutrients). There is a list of tables indexed at the front.

The chapters covering vitamins and minerals contain useful tables summarising food sources of each. In particular, there is a useful table of calcium sources for vegan diets, as much of the book relies on dairy produce as examples of calcium-containing foods. However, requirements for nutrients are not expressed using the reference nutrient intake (RNI). The author does attempt to justify this and gives definitions of recommended daily allowance (RDA) and RNI in the 'diet selection' chapter. However, I still feel this is confusing for readers with little prior knowledge, as even the age categories used and recommended amounts given in the book differ from those of the RNI. For example, calcium is expressed as 'satisfactory daily intakes' in this book using the age categories 1–8 years, 8–20 years and 20–60 years with no differences for men or women, whereas the RNI are categorized as 1–3 years, 4–6 years, 7–10 years, then there are separate recommendations for males and females.

Much of the information in the earlier chapters is nutrient- rather than food-based and so not for those with no previous knowledge and difficult to apply practically. As I read through the text, I did feel that the basic nutrition topics of macro- and micronutrients would have been better placed before rather than after the chapters on specific group requirements for this reason. A reader may find it easier to read the later chapters first. Some sections contain key points in shaded boxes.

This is a book that may have been suitable for Level One pre-registration students. However, I was not wholly satisfied with the accuracy of the book. For example, in the section on ageing, 100 g protein/d is recommended. Using the estimated average requirement for energy this would amount to 22 % of energy from protein. This is clearly in excess of current UK recommendations. Similarly, it suggests that 50 % of fat intake should be from polyunsaturated fatty acids, which contradicts Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy recommendations. These inaccuracies and others make it difficult for me to recommend this book even as an introduction. In addition, I did feel that it promoted the use of artificial supplementation of vitamins and minerals in the earlier chapters rather than encouraging an education approach to a more varied and balanced dietary intake. Some chapters express personal opinion rather than evidence-based recommendations; for example a suggestion about the peanut content of the diet of children with an atopic family history, or heating eggs and milk for those with allergies for these foods. Also, despite being written in the UK, where we know that the average intake of protein exceeds requirements, the author still recommends an increased protein intake in pregnancy. Whilst this may be theoretically sound it is an example of the theory not being applied in a practically useful way.

Some sections of the book are out of date. In a climate of 'baby-friendly initiatives' in hospitals and communities, I would have liked to have seen a more pro-breastfeeding chapter. Indeed, the 'medicines' section of the pregnancy and lactation chapter could have been more baby-friendly in view of the recommendations to breast feed for at least 3 months and preferably throughout the first year of life.

Disappointingly for me the chapter on 'diet selection' did not mention the recommendation of five portions of fruit or vegetables per day nor 'The Balance of Good Health'. Indeed, the author suggests 'two or more items of fruit each day' with no recommendations for the inclusion of vegetables other than as an energy source.

At £12.99 this is a reasonably priced book but for the reasons discussed, not one that I will be using often.

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DOI: 10.1079/BJN2003829

Reynaldo Martorell and Ferdinand Haschke (editors). *Nutrition and Growth*. (2001). Nestlé Nutrition Workshop Series Pediatric Program, vol. 47. £49.00. pp. 424. ISBN 0-7817-3467-3

The subject of nutrition and growth is rarely afforded the distinction of having a whole volume devoted to it, but here we have a top-rate text, well illustrated and comprehensively referenced. The chapters are derived from presentations of a Workshop held in Santiago de Chile (2–6 April 2000). The Discussion sessions, which took place after each of the presentations, were recorded verbatim and have been translated into the text. Not only does this add value to the volume but gives another dimension to the meeting and its deliberations.

The content in this book represents the contributions from scientists from the international community. The editors state that the objective of the workshop was 'to summarize major developments in the last decade in our understanding of the relationship between nutrition and child growth, with emphasis on developing countries'. Many of the presentations review recent trends and tabulate data, some of which are alarming. For example, there are 182 million stunted children under 5 years old in the world today, representing 33 % of that population.

The first chapter contains a comprehensive review of ethnic differences in patterns of human growth in stature and ably sets the scene for later chapters. The extent to which new (and old) reference data for the assessment of growth can be used for the screening and monitoring of children is addressed in other chapters. Amongst the other topics reviewed are recent knowledge about the causes of growth failure, the consequences of poor growth, preventative measures for growth failure at a public health level and the link between early growth retardation and later development of chronic disease.

One chapter named 'Nutritional causes of linear growth failure during complementary feeding' (Gibson & Hotz)