

## 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 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.

David I. Thurnham  
*Faculty of Life and Health Sciences*  
NICHE  
*University of Ulster Coleraine*  
*County Londonderry, BT52 1SA, UK*  
di.thurnham@ulster.ac.uk

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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)