

Book Reviews

Feeding and Nutrition of Infants and Young Children – Guidelines for the WHO European Region, with Emphasis on the Former Soviet Countries. K. Feischer Michaelse, L. Weaver, F. Branca and A. Robertson. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Publications, European Series, no.87. 2000. Swiss franc 82 or £47 (paperback). ISBN 92 890 1354 0

Poor nutrition in infancy and childhood can have both short- and long-term consequences. Short-term consequences include malnutrition, growth retardation, increased risk of infections and possibly premature death. Specific nutrient deficiencies may lead to delayed psychomotor development and impaired cognitive function. As for long-term consequences, malnutrition in the pre- and postnatal period has been associated with diseases in adulthood including CHD and non-insulin-dependent diabetes. Thus, optimum nutrition in infancy and childhood is essential for a healthy population.

In this book, many aspects of nutrition and feeding of infants and children are covered, with the aim of providing information that will help national experts to develop or update their current national feeding recommendations. There is an emphasis on Eastern European countries in particular, as their infant feeding practices are based on outdated recommendations. The target readership could include ministries of health, paediatricians, dietitians, nutrition scientists and public health and other health professionals interested in nutrition who are concerned with the health of young children.

The book is divided into twelve chapters. The first chapter gives a summary of the current status of child nutrition and feeding practices in some countries in the European Region. Chapters 2–6 cover the current recommendations for energy, macronutrients, and some micronutrients. In these chapters, the authors compare the recommendations made by the European Region, UK, USA and WHO. Breast-feeding and complementary feeding are covered in chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 9 deals with the importance of the carer, factors that could cause a decreased level of care and resources that should be used to support the carer. Chapter 10 describes growth and development in the infant and child and details methods of growth assessment. Chapter 11 covers the area of dental health, including the current situation of dental caries in children and guidelines for improving dental health. The final chapter deals with food safety, covering both microbiological and chemical contamination of foods.

This is a very well-written and well-presented book, which was enjoyable to read. The authors have pulled together all the different guidelines available for infant feeding, thus making a good reference source, which can be used universally. The European approach that the book takes is a new angle, as it is useful to know how other

countries encompassed in this book are approaching this area of child nutrition. Also, the advice given for Eastern European countries could be applied for children from low socio-economic groups in other European countries.

Specifically, the authors have addressed the issue of complementary feeding and have written a good section on the practical recommendations for the introduction of complementary foods. However, one point we noticed was that the recommendations for the age of introduction of complementary foods are based on limited evidence-based research, which the authors have acknowledged in their introduction. As this issue is very topical, it is probable that future research may provide more robust evidence, and some recommendations may need to be revised. The recommendations for the introduction of complementary foods to low-birth-weight babies is not clear cut, and this is a further area where recommendations should be viewed with caution. National guidelines do not agree regarding the age when whole cow's milk should be given to the infant as a drink. For example, in the UK, it is advised that cow's milk should not be given as a drink before the age of 1 year, whereas, in this book the recommendation is 9 months.

We feel that this is a very important book, that fills a gap in the market, and we recommend it for any health care professional working in the area of child nutrition. It is very clearly written, so that even those who do not have a background in nutrition can use it. All bio-medical libraries should aim to have a copy. As for students, it might be too expensive to buy; however, if they were to buy one book on current issues in infant nutrition, we recommend that it should be this one.

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Writing and Presenting Scientific Papers. Birgitta Malmfors, Phil Garnsworthy and Michael Grossman. Nottingham: Nottingham University Press. 2000. £15. ISBN 1-897676-92-1

This book takes as its basic message that research does not contribute to knowledge unless its results are effectively communicated. This communication can take a variety of forms from the paper or review in a scientific journal through oral conference presentations, posters, articles in popular magazines and newspapers, to face-to-face discussions. The book's main readership will probably be doctoral students and young scientists starting out on a career in research, and for them it will provide a very valuable source of ideas and information on all these