

BOOK REVIEW

Growth Disorders.

CJH Kelnar, MO Savage, MO Saenger, CT Cowell

2nd Ed. London; Hodder Arnold, 2007 Pp.704. ISBN-13 978-0340812402. Hardback Price £130

Linear growth is a process of great importance as it provides a window into the health status of the growing child or adolescent and as the authors state, it remains 'the final common pathway' for many organic and emotional problems of childhood. In the public health domain, growth remains one of the most useful indices of health and economic well-being in both the developed and the developing worlds. The assessment and interpretation of growth abnormalities forms a cornerstone in the practice of paediatrics and this textbook approaches the subject very well by starting with a detailed section on the fundamental biological mechanisms of normal and abnormal linear growth and how to assess growth accurately. The section on biological mechanisms covers systemic and local control of skeletal growth and development thoroughly and the section on assessment of growth should be particularly congratulated on including a chapter on the general strengths and weaknesses of endocrine tests as well as a chapter on psychological issues that may be related to disorders of growth.

Section three of the textbook deals with poor growth in children with conditions that are primarily managed by clinicians other than paediatric endocrinologists. This is a very welcome section of the textbook for paediatric endocrinologists who may want to refresh their knowledge of particular conditions and their link to growth. It is also a very useful section for the other paediatric and non-paediatric specialists who may not find a similar review of growth in their own speciality's

literature. This section, as well as those that touch on psychological issues, provide the book with some unique features when compared to other similar textbooks in the field of paediatric endocrinology. The final two sections are dedicated to classical endocrine disorders that are associated with disordered growth and their management. They are comprehensive but do not clearly complement each other as there is extensive overlap on similar topics.

On a general point, the editors have tried to introduce a short list of 'key learning points' at the end of each chapter but this feature is not present throughout. Perhaps reducing each chapter to three or four learning points is doing some injustice to the chapter in a textbook such as this and this format may be better suited to a more concise book. The book has also tried to highlight references that are considered seminal primary article, key review paper or a guideline publication. However, the standards for adhering to the use of this guidance varies between chapters. In the current era of the need for accessible electronic information, it should have been possible, at this price, to have the additional feature of electronic access to the text.

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