

**Book Review**

**Karunatilaka DH.**

***Children with neurological symptoms: A Generalist's approach to differential diagnosis.* 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Pannipitiya, Sri Lanka: Stamford Lake Publications; 2009.**

*Sri Lanka Journal of Child Health*, 2009; **38**: 108

Many a textbook in paediatrics tends to focus on separate diseases. The principal approach of these is to provide authoritative information on how these diseases are caused, how they present, how they may be diagnosed, exactly how they should be treated and the vagaries of prognosis. While it is always useful to have accounts of diseases, an axiom in medicine should be to look at a given problem from the standpoint of actual presenting symptoms. One component of such an orientation is the problem-based or presenting symptom-based approach.

This valuable text, which was released in the middle of 2009, is obviously designed primarily as an aid to those studying paediatric neurology with the principal aim of discussing problems from the starting point of clinical presentation. It has indeed incorporated a novel and perhaps a unique approach to the issue in dealing with the subject from the standpoint of neurological symptoms. In quite an incomparable style, the author discusses the intricacies of paediatric neurology from just the stance of symptoms at presentation. This is undeniably the real life situation when a child is brought in with a neurological problem.

The author is a general paediatrician with a special interest in paediatric neurology. He has brought into this book a lifetime of experience in paediatrics spanning close to 40 years. From the starting point of neurological symptoms, the articles in the book go on to discuss the many ramifications of different diseases, their progression and significance. The book provides extensive details on a very large number of neurological diseases and even other illnesses, which may present with neurological symptoms. A wealth of clinical experience has obviously gone into the advice provided in the text as well. The style in which the text is written is ever so readable and the facts are presented so very clearly and in a very simplified manner. The accounts given in the book are very well researched and there is a wide-ranging bibliography to support the contentions given in the text. There is also an extensive index which makes quick referencing of topics that much easier.

This excellent work will be so very useful as a reference text not only for specialist paediatric neurologists but also, and perhaps more so, to the general paediatricians who are called upon to deal with neurological symptoms of children, literally hundreds of times, each week. As such, at its quoted price, this book is definitely a bargain and perhaps an indispensable tool, not only to those involved in paediatric neurology, but also to those studying or practising general paediatrics.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to go through this book and to write a review of it.

**Dr. B J C Perera**  
*Consultant Paediatrician*  
*Colombo, Sri Lanka.*