The Children of Neverland: The Silent Human Disaster


Overall rating: Very good
Strengths: Breadth of topics; compelling writing style
Weaknesses: Lack of detail about any one subject, need for more careful editing

Audience: Anyone professionally or personally interested in the welfare of children

Thousands of children born each year will never reach their full potential, trapped for life in “Neverland.” In Koren’s words, the book is a “human manifesto . . . not a scientific document” and on that level it succeeds.

Using anecdotes, case histories and statistics suitable for the lay reader, Koren describes the many threats to children, arguing that most of these threats are preventable and therefore doubly tragic. Individual chapters address environmental exposures, embryological toxins, medical interventions, poverty, war and ethnic conflict, teenage pregnancy, suicide, poisoning and politics. He cautions us, however, not to draw premature conclusions about risks. He advocates more research involving children as being essential to the prevention of unnecessary abortions and to the improvement of our prevention strategies. He challenges our assumptions about children’s ability to make informed decisions, persuasively contrasting them against the major responsibilities we give babysitters.

The strengths of the book are its breadth and Koren’s caring, compelling style of writing. Breadth, however, is also the book’s principal weakness; the book lacks the detail needed to be a reference for any of the topics. A professional editing might make the text flow more smoothly. Also, it is difficult to evaluate some of the author’s statements because of the limited bibliography. For example, given the extensive sex education now in elementary and high schools, at least in Ontario, I am left wondering if more education is really the solution to the high teenage pregnancy rate.

Who would benefit from reading this book? It should be of specific interest to educators and parents on school councils, health planners, health sciences students and people registering for pregnancy and birthing classes. It may be of particular value as a course book for senior elementary or early high school health classes. Any of us involved in the care of children, however, can afford to be reminded from time to time that while the lives of children are more secure than they were in Charles Dickens’ time, there is still much to do.

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Management of Injuries in Children


Overall rating: Good
Strengths: Reads well; many useful clinical pearls
Weaknesses: Some imbalance in coverage of topics; algorithms would be useful
Audience: Emergency physicians, pediatricians, family physicians who work in the emergency department; others who care for injured children

Physicians who provide acute care to injured children are the intended audience for this book. Written by John Glasgow and H.K. Graham from Sheffield and Ulster respectively, the book has a distinctly British flair. (For instance, the authors show a preference for diazepam for acute management of seizures, as opposed to lorazepam.) The same comment applies to syntax; some North Americans might stumble over terms such as paracetamol and pethidine.