One of the most important developments in the 21st century has been the acknowledgment that clinical practice should be embedded where possible in a sound evidence base. The editors of this new edition of *Forfar & Arneil’s Textbook of Pediatrics* continue to set contributors the challenging task of ensuring that the statements and recommendations made are based on the most robust clinical research available. The objective assessment of evidence and the formulation of secure recommendations from the evidence are gathering pace. In Child Health the evidence base, with the possible exception of disciplines such as oncology and neonatology, is not as comprehensive or as well defined as we would wish. This edition of Forfar & Arneil continues to flag up the most important evidence sources for the content of each chapter. The whole book has been revised and updated and the chapter authors and editors again incorporate where possible secure evidence of therapy, diagnosis, etiology and prognosis. This evidence is incorporated into the individual chapters and in the chapter reference list is starred for easy reference. We believe that the result is the most comprehensive evidence-based general textbook of pediatrics available. Our ability to access best evidence has been greatly enhanced by the rapid advances of information technology and electronic publishing and consequently another important new feature for this edition is a website of the text in which references listed in PUBMED can be accessed via the internet. We would like to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of the many individual authors and our chapter editors, without whom this ambitious project would not have been possible. It has been a great privilege to work with them. We would also like to thank our own secretaries for their unstinting help (Elaine Forbes, Flora Buthlay, Collette Lorne and Stella Taylor) and of course our respective families for sharing the burden with us.

As with previous editions the book is produced by the Elsevier Organization. There have been many highly professional people involved. We hope that this new 7th edition with its expanded formal evidence base will be well received by you, the reader, and become as trusted a friend and guide as have previous editions.

Neil McIntosh
Peter J. Helms
Rosalind L. Smyth
Stuart Logan

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