1092 *Book reviews*

readable, touching as it does on many aspects of general paediatric care. A minority of the content is applicable only to those practising in North America and while we may, for example, not agree that the best time for parents to see a paediatrician is before their baby is born (when circumcision is an appropriate topic for discussion), pleas to look favourably on demands for greater consumer involvement in health care are just as relevant in the United Kingdom.

I would recommend this book to general practitioners and others working in the field of primary paediatric care, but feel it will also appeal to many training for careers in hospital paediatrics.

J PUNTIS

Physical Examination of the Musculoskeletal System. Edited by M Post. Pp 311: £58-00 hardback. Year Book Medical Publishers Inc, 1987.

This book is written by 13 orthopaedic surgeons from North America and one from England. It describes in 12 chapters an approach to the clinical examination of the skeletal system. Two chapters are devoted to examination of children.

I cannot recommend it. I found its style turgid with a disconcerting absence of structure. The chapters devoted to children are confusing and give an impression of adult orientation. The drawings illustrating the section on neonatal hip examination, for instance, are of a much older child and the text gives the impression that the authors are not at all sure what age of child they are examining. The manoeuvres for the detection of congenital dislocation of the hip are badly described. I feel confident that if you have £58 to spend on books you could do better than this one.

D P ADDY

Food Allergy and Intolerance. Edited by J Brostoff and SJ Challacombe. Pp 1032: £75-00 hardback. Bailliere Tindall/WB Saunders, 1987.

The field of food allergy has been described as a model of obstruction to the advancement of learning and sadly this huge book displays the problem all too well. Sixty one chapters cover basic mechanisms, food components and their reactions, end organ effects, diagnosis, and treatment. While the sections on basic science are good, the clinical aspects tend to be dealt with in an uncritical and anecdotal way and this part of the book is very weak indeed. Paediatricians seeking sound practical guidance on food allergy will need to look elsewhere.

T J DAVID

Clinical Endocrinology. Theory and Practice. By Alexis Labhart. Pp 1092: DM 360 hardback. Springer Verlag, 1986.

As the title implies, this volume covers the whole field of endocrinology 'theory and practice' and as such it has much to recommend it. This is the second English edition and all but one of the authors are Swiss, many from the endocrinologically prestigious centre of Zurich. Despite the many authors the style of presentation is consistent and readable, and much of the information is provided concisely in tabular form. Subjects are considered in depth from the 'theoretical' aspect, under such headings as history, embryology, histology, biochemistry, and physiology, before embarking on the clinical practice. The chapters are well divided into specific subsections and by means of excellent indexing it is easy to locate any subject; there is some reference to almost every-

thing. The sizeable list of references is well selected and divided according to the sections.

A review for a paediatric journal must perforce focus on its relevance for paediatricians, for whom this book has not specifically been written. Nevertheless, the authors include many eminent paediatricians and the consideration of some paediatrically childhood disorders is comprehensive; yet overall the paediatric component is a little lost in this large volume. There is not a consistent emphasis in the presentation of diseases of paediatric relevance, some being adequately considered, others with little more than a mention, and frequently theory overrides the practical paediatric clinical element. Those subjects which have special sections for the childhood disease fare better than those in which no such specific consideration is given. In diseases which are uncommon in children compared with adults, such as thyrotoxicosis or Cushing's syndrome, little reference is made to clinical aspects of particular importance in children, notably growth. There is little space given to the subject of adolescent endocrinological problems other than reference to physical changes of puberty included in a chapter on growth and development (in which only a few standard values cited, not surprisingly, by the Swiss).

As this book is not written primarily for paediatric endocrinologists it is clearly not the best for them, but that was not its purpose. It serves better for adult endocrinologists who wish to extend their knowledge into the age range of childhood. But a paediatrician is looking for a comprehensive overview of endocrinology, and willing to extend his interest outside the limits of clinical childhood disease, this is certainly a worthwhile book for his collection.

J M H BUCKLEY