Setting water tight questions is always difficult and experts might disagree on what was the diagnosis and what was the differential diagnosis in case 87, but the questions mainly avoid confusion.

In two cases my colleagues and I were unable to identify the lesion reported in the answer (a pneumothorax and a radiolucent area in bone) even after looking at the *x* ray pictures again, but I imagine there is an inherent problem in transposing *x* rays into print that makes them less clear than the original.

For myself, I enjoyed reading this book and learned a lot. For teaching in paediatric departments and for private study it will be a useful resource. Diploma in child health candidates are rarely shown *x* ray films, but this book will be useful for those taking part II of the MRCP examination in paediatrics. Presumably it will be similarly helpful to radiologists in training.

G MCENERY

Understanding Allergies. By M Steel. Pp 176: £5.95 paperback. Consumer's Association/Hodder and Stoughton, 1986.

Food Allergy—A Primer for People. By S A Bock. Pp 72: paperback. A J Publishing Co, 1986.

These are both good books about allergy and can be recommended to parents. 'Understanding Allergies' is easy to read, covers a wide field, is technically fairly accurate, though tends to emphasise the allergic aspects of atopic disease, and is marred only by a weak final section on complementary medicine. 'Food Allergy—A Primer for People' is confined to the subject of food allergy and is a distillation of the various diagnostic and therapeutic

principles and techniques. It has a useful final section on controversial or unorthodox procedures.

T J DAVID

Inspecting the Newborn Baby's Eyes. By N O'Doherty, Pp 104: £75.00 hardback. MTP Press, 1986.

Professor O'Doherty comes over in his book as an enthusiastic and stimulating teacher, full of anecdote and incidental observation. At first, the title of the book seems very limiting as fundoscopy is almost entirely excluded and the level of examination suggested appropriate for the obstetric or paediatric senior house officer. On turning the pages, however, one is persuaded that almost all of neonatal disease may be seen by inspecting babies' eyes. The mainly coloured plates are very well reproduced but illustrate much that is only peripheral to the examination of the eyes, such as cryptorchidism, syndactyly, and a child with a hearing aid to illustrate deafness. Many show older infants or even adults.

Unfortunately, while being a delightful read for the experienced paediatrician and classicist (it is liberally sprinkled with quotations), the book is too eclectic and meandering for the learner. Where the slide collection was well provided rarities are well illustrated. In the brief section on eye infections, however, chlamydia is not even mentioned, and retinopathy of prematurity only just gets in, although the index refers us to illustrations of a retinoblastoma. At £75, it is only a suitable gift for the neonatologist who has everything.

RICHARD COOKE

Practical Paediatrics. Edited by M J Robinson. Pp 613: £24.00 paperback. Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

This is described in the foreword as the first Australian textbook of general paediatrics. It is aimed mainly at undergraduates but is more comprehensive than most such British texts. Though the list of authors is large, including 38 Australians and one Malaysian, the style is consistent and readable and the approach practical and problem orientated. I particularly liked the chapters on genetics, the approach to the dysmorphic child, and growth and development and the section on social and preventive paediatrics. History and examination is not neglected and the chapter on the difficult topic of inborn errors of metabolism is a model of clarity.

The practical presentation can cause problems, such as the unsatisfactory siting of important topics like failure to thrive and fever of unknown origin in a miscellaneous penultimate chapter. Nutrition is dealt with rather skimpily, just six pages, including two on obesity and one that is a list of artificial milks.

These are, however, minor criticisms. I enjoyed reading this book and would recommend it to my residents reading for postgraduate examinations. It has a distinctive Australian flavour in morbidity and epidemiology data, in covering the problems of Aboriginal and Australian immigrant families, and even in mention of Agent Orange as a possible teratogen, but overall this book differs little from my practice and teaching in northern Scotland. I would suggest that a British edition with minor modifications would be a considerable competitor for our own textbooks.

P J SMAIL