Mattson) and ethosuximide (Fromm and Crumrine). Finally, there are reviews on the complex relation of sexual disorders to epilepsy (Ribak), the latter strongly based on animal experimental studies.

Paediatric libraries should have these three volumes, which form a unit. Those doctors with a special interest in epilepsy will undoubtedly want to have them on their own shelves.

J B P STEPHENSON

The Treatment of Children by Acupuncture. By J Scott. Pp 199: softback. The Journal of Chinese Medicine, 1986.

This book is mainly a practical handbook for those already practising acupuncture and familiar with traditional Chinese medicine and is, therefore, of limited value to those who are not, for whom the terminology is largely incomprehensible, despite a limited glossary. Dr Scott has several qualifications, though not medical, and practises acupuncture for children in a Brighton clinic.

The opening chapter reminds us of some of the rich wisdom in ancient Chinese sayings, but the author goes on to give us (from his own experience supplemented by translation from Chinese texts) some quaint explanations of disease: 'a red tip to the tongue always denotes mental irritation'. There are many dogmatic statements that have no foundation in medical facts ('inoculations commonly cause hyperactivity and retarded growth'), and despite believing that alternative treatments can be complementary to orthodox medicine, I find it hard to take Dr Scott seriously. It is a relief that in occasional diseases such as pneumonia and convulsions a combination with Western medicine is recommended.

Apart from increasing general awareness of different approaches to disease, this book would be of little value in a paediatric library.

JOSEPHINE HAMMOND

Advances in International Maternal and Child Health. Edited by D B Jelliffe and E F P Jelliffe. Pp 227: £22.00 hardback. Clarendon Press, 1986.

To attempt to cover a balanced selection of the recent publications on maternal and child health in one volume sounds an impossible task. The editors have made a creditable attempt and this book, the sixth

in a yearly series, inevitably reflects their orientation—towards breast feeding, nutritional assessment, and the socioeconomic and political aspects of maternal and child health. All the contributors bar one (an Australian) are from the United States, which is a disappointment in a book with this title.

The nine chapters are mostly clear and relevant reviews of controversial topics. In addition to those mentioned below, the selection includes an update on the measurement of malnutrition; two chapters on breast feeding; appropriate technology in perinatal care; and the cost benefits of immunisation programmes. The first two reviews look at international political issues; as the editors point out in their preface, "Family health . . . depends as much on politics as on the invasiveness of bacteria and immunity". Eisenbud and colleagues review the effects on children and adolescents of the threat of a nuclear war. It is now well known that "thoughts of nuclear annihilation have penetrated deeply into the consciousness of children", but it is sad to hear that most do not talk to their parents about their fears. Far more Soviet than American children believe that a nuclear war is preventable. The Soviet Union does not come out so well from the next chapter, which examines that country's failure to publish infant mortality statistics since 1974. Field depends more on speculation than on facts in listing the factors that could cause the assumed rising mortality. These include a high birth rate in the disadvantaged rural areas, a deteriorating medical system, maternal alcoholism, and the effects of the arms race on health care. All these factors are also present in many other countries, and certainly defence expenditure has been shown to be related to infant mortalities. A more scientific approach is merited, however, in a book of this authority.

The two other chapters I found most useful were a review of iodine deficiency disorders and an account of the effects of the street food trade on women and children. We learn that iodised oil by injection is the best means of prevention of goitre and is administered by 'barefoot doctors' in China: would that such a system could be introduced for immunisation in this country. Why not put iodine in the bread and the water? It can be done, Hetzel tells us, but only where the population has access to such luxuries . . .

Street food trade is an understudied part of the 'health system' and could merit review in London as well as in the Philli-

nes, though the results might be less positive. It was a surprise to me to learn from Cohen that the street food trade is of value (1) because it contributes to the urban economy, (2) because it saves cooking time for working women, and (3) it is even nutritious—because traditional foods cooked in scarce oil are often used.

Overall, the book is a valuable anthology but I would like to see a wider range of authors and subjects included; the delivery of primary health care and the first line management of common acute diseases could profit from coverage. It should be in the library of all internationally orientated paediatric departments.

TONY WATERSTON

Foundations of Developmental Genetics. By D J Pritchard. Pp 372: £14.50 softback, £33.00 hardback. Taylor and Francis, 1986.

This book provides a detailed introduction to developmental genetics and is intended primarily for undergraduates. It will be particularly useful for doctors and medical students, however, as it emphasises the close links between embryology, genetics, and molecular biology and assumes only a basic knowledge of transmission genetics, biology, and biochemistry. It is well written, beautifully presented, and contains many clear diagrams. There is an extensive selection of references at the end of each chapter, leaving the prose uncluttered. Many of the examples are taken from the animal kingdom and the medical implications of variations in embryological development and genetic expression are rarely mentioned. Viruses are omitted completely.

The book begins by discussing the differences between prokaryotes and eukaryotes. The method of initiation of cytodifferentiation follows and then a description of the destination of entoderm, mesoderm, and ectoderm in a developing vertebrate. In the chapter on embryonic induction there is a detailed explanation of the development of the eye and the fate of the neural crest. The chapter on cytoplasmic and extracellular controls emphasises that natural selection acts on the phenotype, which is the product of genotype and environment. The structure and function of deoxyribonucleic acid and ribonucleic acid, and the genetic code and its translation, are carefully described. Theories regarding gene amplification, deletion, and expres-