SISTER JOURNALS—UNITED STATES

Journal of Pediatrics
As an immediately postwar child, I recall nostalgically the arrival at my home of food parcels from relatives in the United States. No doubt the food itself was welcome but what is impressed upon my mind were the extravagantly glossy and brightly coloured advertisements in the magazines used as wrapping.

I am reminded of these promises of a more glamorous life when obtaining my monthly fix of the *Journal of Pediatrics*—an addiction now well into its second decade. The September 1990 issue is no exception with two aggressive ‘puffs’ for commercial preparations of surfactant, the second consuming six pages. The United States equivalent of the data sheet for Exosurf, printed in its entirety, albeit almost invisibly for the evolving hypermetrope, is in itself an education both in neonatal physiology and ethical advertising.

The *Journal of Pediatrics* can be relied upon to provide details of meticulously prepared research studies. I forgive it repeatedly that a sledgehammer may be used to crack a nut and that, if pagination is any guide, it often takes at least double the number of blows that the more economical *Archives of Disease in Childhood* might have used.

September’s issue is a serendipitous choice in that the first paper is by our own Roy Meadow. (By ‘our’ I don’t mean Leeds where he is professor but Banbury where he was once a general practitioner.) His paper is on suffocation, recurrent apnoea, and sudden infant death; does this mean he will now encounter vituperative press coverage Stateside to add to that provoked in the UK by those who point out that not all parents are squeaky clean? Incidentally, those who believe the major fault of American journals is their insularity should note that of the 32 papers in the September issue, eight are from Europe, two from Africa, and two from the Americas outside the United States.

As a generalist without registrars to keep me up to date but with an army of managers who leave me little enough time to practise medicine let alone read about it, I have to be carefully selective. Of the 32 papers I rated six worth keeping complete and six worth keeping for

their summary—including the one I kept simply because it quoted me in its references, a rare citation for a largely commercial scribbler; this is a hit rate of 40% which must be hard to beat.

About the only groups who will find little for them here are the community paediatricians and child psychiatrists, although both might be bemused by the paper entitled ‘Dermatoglyphics in children with abdominal pain and constipation’.

The *Journal of Pediatrics* takes itself pretty seriously: there are none of the jokey one liners of its sister transatlantic specialist journal or the historical delvings of the *Archives*. It’s surprisingly cheap at about £3·50 an issue including air mail postage so all those advertisements must be worthwhile; especially one seeking a paediatrician in Phoenix, Arizona offering ‘excellent fringe benefits including paid malpractice’.

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