authoritatively. They deal with the preparation of human growth hormone and methods for its assay in biological fluids, the metabolic actions of growth hormone, its interactions with other hormones, the treatment of dwarfism with growth hormone, and the problems that result from the development of antibodies to the hormone during therapeutic use. Each chapter is succinct and, most important, backed up by a comprehensive bibliography. Two of the chapters, dealing with the preparation of growth hormone and its assay, are complemented by technical appendices. These are inappropriate to a book of this scope for most of those concerned with the extraction and measurement of growth hormone will choose to work from more authoritative sources than this book.

If the book were half the price and thereby presumably paper backed it could be recommended as a worth-while purchase for endocrinologists and paediatricians with a developing or established interest in the hormone. As it is, the volume will find a justified place on the shelves of medical and biological libraries where it will be consulted with gratification by those who want a quick entree into the topics it covers.


Writing on another book on paediatric therapy 2 years ago, our reviewer wrote 'Is the idea of divorcing therapy from the rest of medicine a good or even a possible one? This book has failed to convince one reader that it is.' The volume edited by Dr. Shirkey and written by 96 contributors is large, elegant, and magnificently produced. 300 pages are devoted to general principles and methods of treatment, approximately 600 to treatment of specific disorders, and there are valuable and detailed sections distinguished by coloured pages on poisoning and on drug dosage and use. There are excellent cross-references.

The question still remains as to whether a book on therapy is worth while. Most paediatricians will have arrived at a strategy for dealing with the common disorders they meet, and they will only change this in response to a really well-argued original paper showing that a particular method of treatment is better than what they already do. They are therefore likely to consult a book on therapy mostly in relation to rare disorders. Here they may be disappointed: on histiocytosis X, for example, there are three very short sections which will tell few paediatricians more than they know already. For the less experienced paediatrician the book also has limitations as a guide to management. Will he be satisfied with febrile convulsions being discussed in two sentences—'Febrile convulsions are managed in no different manner than are the afebrile variety. Anti-convulsants are introduced with the first seizure'?

The initiated will note that Dr. Sidney Carter is co-author of this chapter, and will remember the impression made by his paper 'Management of the child who has had one convulsion' (Pediatrics, 33, 431, 1964). But one hears the distraught resident on Saturday night saying 'But Dr. Carter, what do I say to the parents? And what do they do if he gets another fever? Or another fit?'

There are other articles which present too personal a point of view to be accepted as standard statements of current treatment. After reading Dr. Hilde Bruch's perceptive article on obesity, I felt that all the inadequacies of my treatment of this disorder had been exposed. But I also felt that my (admittedly pretty insecure) faith in dietary treatment had been destroyed without anything tangible being offered in its place. I had been told how to behave with an obese child but not how to treat him. On recurrent abdominal pain the reader is offered no guidance at all.

Yet there are very many really excellent chapters, not all of which one would think of looking up in a book on therapy. The section on 'Modification of laboratory tests caused by drugs' is a unique compilation; and Dr. James Sussex's chapter on 'Death of a child patient' is one of the most helpful practical accounts of what the paediatrician should do in relation to all the other people involved. There are more obvious pearls like Dr. Harry Schwachman and Dr. Kon Taik Khaw's account of the Boston Children's Hospital regimen for cystic fibrosis.

This is a valuable book, but it is probably better value to browse through it at leisure than to use it as a shelf bible to consult in an emergency.


A symposium is made up of varied contributions differing in content and quality, and this book, though admirably edited, reflects this characteristic. Once committed to publishing the proceedings of a symposium, the editors must accept indifferent presentations with the brilliant.

A meeting between practising paediatricians and medical advisers to the pharmaceutical industry is reported. There are sections on clinical investigations, placental transfer, action of drugs, immunization, cytotoxic therapy, and neuro- and psychopharmacology. Most of the chapters present summaries of the state of knowledge in late 1970 on a wide selection of therapeutic problems. The section on immunization presents the scientific basis of prophylaxis against the infectious fevers with evidence from experimental and field studies. The review of placental function in 3 chapters presents the modern concept of the function of the placenta in immunity and medical therapy with clarity and a wealth of evidence from original work. In the specialist chapters, acknowledged experts review briefly the field of their work. Except for a chapter on the practical implications of trials of therapy in