circumstances on later development' and is a rich source of information both on what has and what has not been demonstrated in this difficult field, and also of the limitations of the methodology employed. The book is worth reading for this chapter alone; and it contains no more comfort for those who are dismissive of public anxiety than it does fuel for those who express it. No doubt time will show where the balance lies; but in the meantime the onus of proof is clearly on those who advocate changes in traditional practices and the unmonitored introduction of new techniques. However, it is time that some bathwater was emptied for the sake of the baby and one practice that can surely no longer be justified, as Rosen shows, is the almost routine administration of pethidine ostensibly to relieve the pains of labour, whereas it has been said to be almost unique among drugs for having major side effects and minimal useful effects.

No other obvious conclusion emerges, except perhaps a reinforcement of the old adage, *primum non nocere*. It is important that we should not be in too much of a hurry in applying new ideas to practice at large, or assume too much responsibility for matters that lie outside our competence as physicians (though they may involve our responsibilities as citizens). Technology is a good servant; but like Jeeves and Crichton, its very competence may lead to its taking over the functions of a less competent set of masters. The answer for the profession is clear; we must be sure about the ends we serve and we must be informed about the means we employ to achieve these. In this our obstetric colleagues have once again given a lead to the whole profession and we should be grateful to them for this and for a publication obviously resulting from their initiative in undertaking what is now known as a self audit. Other specialists including our own should follow their example and that set by neonatologists.

JOHN A. DAVIS

**Shorter notices**


The international symposium was held in Milan in October 1976; 32 papers are recorded.


A multiauthor monograph from the US surveying the pathology of diabetes in depth. The photomicrographs are superb. Chapters on juvenile diabetes and viral diabetes will be those likely to be most relevant to paediatricians.


Twelve chapters by different authors from the US or Canada discuss current topics in paediatric haematology mainly from the clinician's angle.


The working party of the Tunbridge Wells Study Group first met in 1973 and published *Concerning Child Abuse in 1975.* This is a record of its meeting in October 1976.