much more effectively if they have some understanding of each others' work. With this in mind Dr Woods has written a straightforward account of the causes and medical management of handicap with our colleagues in the educational and social services chiefly in mind.

The author sensibly deals mainly with the common varieties of mental, physical and sensory handicap, and rarer entities are mentioned only in passing. The educational implications of each condition are clearly explained and many are illustrated by examples from the author's practice. Perhaps the role of the parent in the care of the handicapped child might have received more stress, but it is difficult to include everything in a book which is deliberately concise. The style makes for pleasant reading and is refreshingly free from medical jargon.

Dr Woods' down to earth approach and her wealth of experience enables her to write a book which may be confidently recommended to our colleagues in these other professions. Paediatricians in training will also find much accumulated wisdom as well as an excellent summary of good practice in the medical care of children with handicapping disorders.

J R MOORE

Congenital Deformities of the Spine. By R B Winter. Pp 343: \$70.00 hardback. New York: Thieme-Stratton, 1983.

This monograph represents a retrospective survey of over 1000 cases of congenital deformity of the spine treated by one centre. While adequately covering the diagnosis and some of the available methods of treatment, the text is purely descriptive and it is a pity that such an enormous clinical experience has not been converted into a management philosophy, which is so much needed with these very complex deformities.

With historical surveys the reader finds out very clearly what can be done, but what should be done is not necessarily the same. Non-operative treatment may be important for the 25% of cases that show a mild progression potential not dissimilar to the idiopathic deformity, but the value of any form of non-operative treatment for any type of deformity has never been subjected to a controlled trial and recent reports indicate that curve deterioration well into the third decade is the rule rather than the exception. This is hardly surprising if the vertebral epiphyses

do not fuse until the 25th year. The non-operative treatment chapter focusses on the old-fashioned Milwaukee brace and there is no mention of modern casting methods, while too much emphasis is placed on the posterior fusion for the progressive curve. While certainly of value for the 25% of cases of mild progression potential, it is contra-indicated in those with severe progression potential as the posterior tethering strut favours appreciable rotational progression. For the severe rigid curves, multiple anterior and posterior operations may be necessary, but I would like to have seen more emphasis on the wedge resection of the vertebral column performed in two stages, firstly anterior and secondly posterior, pioneered by Leatherman, who certainly has the world's greatest experience. Accounts of operative procedures with their attendant illustrations are excellent and the text is well set out but I would like to have seen more of an 'in depth' philosophical approach in return for the author's 6 months' sabbatical leave.

ROBERT A DICKSON

Children with Brain Dysfunction. Neurology, Cognition, Language and Behaviour. By I Rapkin. Pp 284: \$42.16 hardback. New York: Raven Press, 1982.

This book aims to explain central nervous dysfunction in terms of up to date information on how the brain works. Although short, the book provides a feast of information based on 681 references. There is a valuable glossary of those neurological terms that everyone assumes you know—but may not.

Dr Rapin begins with a review of the organisation and fine structure of the mature brain. A chapter attempting to define brain dysfunction and introducing the major types is followed by one on epilepsy. The central hundred pages of the book are a systematic discussion of the common types of long term dysfunction, including some genetic and degenerative disorders. There are chapters on motor and sensory dysfunction and disorders of attention, learning, and behaviour. In these she skilfully blends available knowledge of neuroanatomy and pathophysiology with insights gained from animal studies and neurological disease in adults and children, in order to increase our understanding of how normal function is disturbed. In chapters on language and

cognitive disorders, the more tentative aetiological background is frankly acknowledged and Dr Rapin sensibly bases her discussion on a helpful functional classification of the main varieties of learning and communication disorder. She introduces us to a number of the increasingly discriminating test instruments on which this is based. The book ends with chapters on investigation and management which, like the chapter on epilepsy, offer a rather brief summary that is less clearly related to knowledge of brain function than the rest of the book.

Paediatricians will find much of value in this monograph as a background to their clinical practice and teaching. As I hope, there will be future editions, greater stress on the function of the developing brain would make a good book even better.

J R MOORE

Adolescent Medicine. Edited by Hofmann. Pp 550: \$35.00 hardback. California: Addison-Wesley Medical Nursing Division, 1983.

Adolescent medicine has not emerged as a distinct discipline in the UK partly because of the family orientation of the primary health care system and partly because of the prevalent attitude that adolescence is the healthiest age of man. Dr Hoffman's forward to this multi-authored textbook counters the latter with a catalogue of organic and behavioural health problems facing the 10–21 year age group—a list increasingly dominated by sexual experimentation, drug and alcohol consumption, inexperienced automobile (motorcycle) driving, and concern about long term unemployment.

This textbook is aimed at primary care physicians working in the United States and it will appeal to only a limited readership in the UK. Those involved in the care of adolescents in schools, colleges, or within hospitals will gain from the better sections of this book which provide useful guidance on organising clinic facilities for adolescents (with and without parents), coping with sexual problems, drug abuse, behavioural difficulties, and chronic illness. Even healthy pursuits can generate concern and there is a useful chapter catering for the athlete.

A less satisfactory aspect of this book is the attempt to provide a systematic review of general medical disorders. The