paediatricians, general practitioners, and pharmacists can only be determined in time. My opinion is that it will—but only to a limited extent.

Its scope is broad and covers most of the background material one would expect—principles of drug action, drug handling processes, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics, specific pharmacological principles relating to different periods of childhood from fetus to older child, ethical considerations, and clinical trials. The major part is devoted to a systematic approach to drugs detailing the relevant physiology and giving some information on use, actions, drug handling, and adverse effects.

So what are its limitations? These necessarily reflect my views of what the 'aimed for' readership wants rather than the extent by which the volume falls short of the author's aims. Problems inevitably arise in this field when pharmacology and therapeutics are separated. For the clinician, a combined approach is usually necessary and books aimed at covering one or the other field in isolation usually leave frustrating gaps in content and clinical relevance.

As the volume does not limit itself to principles of pharmacology, I would like to have seen a section on medication compliance and therapeutic drug monitoring included, but these are clearly therapeutic

aspects. In addition, although the physiological background descriptions are good, similar outlines on pathophysiology are omitted and it is sometimes difficult, therefore, to understand the exact role of the drugs described. The author, like others in pharmacology, has described the uses of some drugs but not of others; the action, absorption, distribution, elimination, and adverse effects are given for some drugs but not others. This inconsistency is found in most pharmacology works and unless such topics are specifically addressed according to headings or tables, it is likely to continue. In this context, and although not stated, some of the omissions in this book must relate to the still not inconsiderable gaps in our knowledge of the pharmacology of commonly used drugs in children.

I believe the author has achieved his aim of outlining principles of paediatric pharmacology but this occupies only a small part of the whole volume. The remainder reads like many other pharmacology texts that I was previously told to read and am now asked to read. The only difference this time is a paediatric slant to the subject.

GEORGE RYLANCE

Controversies in Pediatric Surgery. Edited by B F Brooks. Pp 232: \$35.00 hardback. University of Texas Press, 1984.

This book records the fourth annual Robert E Gross Symposium held in Houston, Texas. Forty three contributors from various parts of the United States plus the visiting lecturer Dr Harvey E Beardmore from Canada and one representative from the United Kingdom presented papers. As the title suggests, specific areas in which controversy continues to exist were selected for presentation and discussion at the meeting. These include undescended testis, appendicitis, necrotising enterocolitis, portal hypertension, pseudo-obstruction, anorectal agenesis, hydrocephalus, lymphoedema, and the ethical implications of fetal surgery.

The protagonists and antagonists of various forms of treatment for the above conditions present material and discuss the reasons for adoption of specific courses of action in treatment of these conditions. The contents are clearly presented and will interest not only surgeons but also medical paediatricians. Most will be able to find some evidence reinforcing their own preconceived ideas in each of these conditions, but the reader is forced to reappraise his own management of each.

The editor is to be congratulated on the speed of publication of this symposium and this early publication increases the book's value.

D G YOUNG