The book has seemingly been written primarily for general haematologists, but the jacket also boldly proclaims that it will be invaluable to a wide range of other specialists including pathologists, biochemists, immunologists, paediatricians, and even undergraduates. In truth it is most likely to appeal to those already interested in prostaglandin research rather than those seeking to broaden their knowledge, but paediatricians who like to keep abreast of the times might profitably scan at least section 3 if they can borrow a copy.

JOHN LILLEYMAN

The Epilepsy Reference Book. By P M Jeavons and A Aspinall. Pp 121: £3.95 paperback. Harper and Row, 1985.

For most lay people epilepsy is equated with generalised tonic-clonic seizures which induce responses of panic and helplessness in their observers. The *Epilepsy Reference Book* is designed to improve non-professional understanding. It consists of a series of answers to queries raised by patients, their relatives, and friends. The authors have spent their professional lives caring for people with seizure disorders. In particular, having worked closely with the advisory services of the British Epilepsy Association, they are well versed in the type of question asked. Their experience in providing answers is probably unrivalled and most of the statements in the book are masterfully uncontroversial.

The introduction contains a list of where to find answers to queries classified in relation to seizures, causes of epilepsy, diagnosis, investigations, treatment and outlook, first aid, living with epilepsy, help available, restrictions, employment, and fears and misunderstandings about epilepsy. This admirably supplements the conventional list of contents and the index. It is characteristic of the authors' approach that the largest sections are those on living with epilepsy, and fears and misunder-

standings. The information on employment is particularly well presented. In other areas there are answers which are not easily comprehensible in isolation and tendencies to use medical terms without adequate explanation. For example 'photosensitivity' is used in six places, but only explained in one, and 'idiopathic' and 'primary generalised epilepsy' are undefined. A glossary of medical terms would be helpful.

Although most of the text is probably comprehensible to the non-medical reader, the authors might find it useful to go through the book with the parents of a child newly diagnosed as having epilepsy before bringing out a second edition.

SHEILA WALLACE

My Child Won't Sleep. By J Douglas and N Richman. Pp 123: £1.75 paperback. Penguin Books, 1984.

This book is written for parents. In an inexpensive text of 123 pages, the authors have managed to describe the common patterns of sleep disturbances in childhood, and offer practical advice on their management.

An initial description of normal sleep patterns is followed by chapters on sleep in infancy, family factors in sleep disturbance, settling problems, night waking, early morning waking, and sleep in the handicapped child. The authors make the important point that lack of sleep does not harm children physically. Considering poor sleeping as a social nuisance rather than as an illness, they go on to describe simple behaviour modification techniques to redirect the unwanted behaviour. The advice given is straightforward; I would think that a well motivated parent could understand and follow it, but it does require a degree of insight on the part of the parent. The theoretical points made are illustrated by short case histories, which bring the book alive to the reader.

The text is unusually well referenced, a

feature which will make it additionally attractive to health visitors and doctors.

K N PEARL

Chronic Childhood Disorders. A Handbook of Medical Care in the Community. By G P Hosking and R Powell. Pp 280: £17.50 hardback. Wright, 1985.

This compact book contains an impressive amount of information, clearly presented, on various chronic disorders. The chapters, by various experts, include basic definitions and clinical details together with current investigatory patterns, treatment regimens, and prognosis. At the conclusion of each group of disorders there are basic practice points, references, and lists of additional information sources. The technical details are augmented by consideration of statutory and voluntary facilities, and management aspects of daily living for the patient and family.

No book of this size can expect to be comprehensive but the addition of a chapter on chronic skin disorders would be helpful. The failure to recognise the valuable role of good playgroups in the crucial preschool years in assisting development, improving the quality of life, and aiding social integration of children with chronic disorders and their families is to be regretted.

The information in this book should be of considerable interest and value to doctors in training (for all child health work), in alerting primary care doctors to the possible presence of a chronic disorder in patients, the interpretation of hospital reports, monitoring case progress, and communicating effectively with parents and colleagues, teachers and social workers.

The use of 'community' has been avoided as hopefully books such as this highlight and confirm the need for unification of child health case management when the terms 'hospital' and 'community' can be used without division.

ANN RAMES