Current therapy in pediatric infectious disease. By J D Nelson. £39.50 hardback. Blackwell Scientific, 1986.

There is a loose overall format but a great variance in the amount of general background information with which each author invests his writing. This may leave the reader glossing over the obvious on the one hand and scurrying to standard works on the other to provide a base for the text. This is a book more for the doctor with a certain minimum of experience than for the student. The editor sees the book as the synthesis of the contributor's past instruction, personal experience, and assessment of the medical publications. There are thus no references. It is always of interest to hear how others deal with clinical problems familiar to oneself, but I found the absolute absence of references somewhat frustrating when stimulated by a comment to look up the source.

Overall, the book makes interesting and enjoyable reading, but I am doubtful of its usefulness to the general British paediatrician. At times I could not help feeling that parts of it were lacking in substance, and because of the array of diseases covered too little is often said of too much.

S P CONWAY

Child Health Behavior: a Behavioral Pediatric Perspective. Edited by N A Krasnegor, J D Arasteth, M F Cataldo. Pp 644: £49.10 hardback. John Wiley and Sons, 1986.

To what extent should British paediatricians be concerning themselves with developments in behavioural paediatrics? Is there any coherent 'behavioural paediatrics perspective' on child health behaviour as the title of this prolix volume suggests. Perhaps not, if we accept the view of the

Intended to be a comprehensive assessment of the current state of knowledge about behavioural paediatrics, the book suffers from a lack of focus. For instance, a chapter on the philosophy of 'behavioural systems' rubs shoulders with an excellent review of the appropriate functions health education should play in schools. All in all, there are 26 chapters, but just one in three merits reading in depth. These include, besides that mentioned above, approaches to the control of childhood accidents, a critical review of campaigns to reduce smoking among adolescents, social and behavioural aspects of obesity, the primary prevention of hypertension, a biobehavioural analysis of the origins and management of childhood headache, problems in parental compliance with treatment, paediatric gastrointestinal disorders, strategies and future directions for research in behaviour management of paediatric problems, and issues concerning training in behavioural paediatrics.

Besides difficulties in maintaining a coherent focus of content, the book suffers from failing clearly to define its potential readership. Paediatricians may well become exasperated by endless 'conceptual models' and discussion on the 'theoretical underpinning of ecological sub-systems.' A more than passing acquaintance with the use of behaviour modification techniques is advisable before tackling the contributions by behavioural scientists. Clinical psychologists and child psychiatrists involved in paediatric liaison work may find it more to their taste. In conclusion, this could have been an excellent book at half the length, highlighting issues the contemplation of which would benefit those employed in general or community paediatric practice.

DAVID SKUSE

The Overactive Child. Edited by J. A. Taylor. Pp 269: £16.00 hardback. Blackwell Scientific/Spastics International Medical Publications, 1986.

This book from the Maudsley has taken on the task of critically examining what is truth and untruth and what is fact and fantasy in the world of hyperactivity. The result is a scholarly and objective book that leaves no stone unturned. While it is not light reading, there is an enormous amount of real information on a subject that has been surrounded by vagueness in definition and management.

GWILYN HOSKING

Diagnostic Paediatric Imaging—a Case Study Teaching Manual. By C M Hall, S Lingam. Pp 200: £29.00 hardback. Springer-Verlag, 1986.

This 'case study teaching manual' assembled by a radiologist and a paediatrician presents imaging material from 108 cases arranged in systems. Each case has three to five questions based usually on one or two images. Answers on the following page are of easy access (possibly too easy) with concise information and often further explanatory images. The imaging examples cover all the usual modalities except angiograms and nuclear magnetic resonance, and there seem to be no examples of intracardiac anomalies. The central nervous system is also probably under-represented, with only four cases. Aspects tested cover not only powers of radiological observation but also a knowledge of relevant clinical matters as well as the choice of further imaging techniques to use. Some emphasis is laid on testing practical knowledge on performing radiological procedures—for example, barium enema for intussusception in case 19—and the choice of contrast material to use. Examination candidates need lists of differential diagnoses and this book has them—for example, conditions associated with hemihypertrophy, causes of osteoporosis, and causes of radial hypoplasia.

The answers are concise but some have further comments, though there are no references to read further. There is a good subject index.