Current methods of screening for hearing loss in the community are discussed, although 'performance tests' and speech discrimination tasks, which are widely used as screening techniques in children aged 3–5 years, are confusingly included in diagnostic audiometry. The author suggests that the audiological management provided in her district could be regarded as a model for future developments and describes it in some detail. A similar service could, however, be provided by districts with different staff and facilities.

The sections covering the effects of hearing loss on the child concentrate on the more prevalent condition of secretory otitis media, with the author's bias in favour of active management being strongly stated. There is less emphasis on sensorineural hearing losses. This balance may be reasonable in view of the potential market for this book. Overall this is a clear, concise, and informative book on those aspects of paediatric audiology of interest to the non-specialist and as such deserves a wide readership.


This book aims to provide a contemporary summary of child psychiatry for all doctors concerned with children, but especially paediatricians and psychiatrists in training. ICD 9 and DSM III, which are not food additives but rival multiaxial systems for classification of psychiatric disorders, are assessed and their limitations noted. Clear accounts of the various disorders are presented within a developmental framework. Competing aetiological theories are mentioned but emphasis is placed on the known facts of epidemiology, characteristics, and prognosis of each condition. Psychosocial aspects of physical diseases are well covered. Some paediatricians may find the summaries of medical aspects of the various illnesses and handicaps to be superfluous, but their inclusion provides useful background information for readers from other disciplines.

Treatment methods are reviewed impartially. Many examples of different approaches are given, illustrating appropriate interventions by general practitioners and paediatricians, as well as by more specialised therapists. The book concludes with a section on preventive approaches. Primary prevention will depend mainly on public policy. There is, however, plenty of guidance to individual professionals to improve their personal practice by enhancing communication, fostering children's self-esteem and promoting healthy attitudes within families.

If there has been any tendency for paediatricians to imagine child psychiatry as a marginal discipline practiced behind one way screens, this book provides a welcome overview which places a concern for psychosocial issues firmly at the heart of paediatrics. It is concise, well referenced, and remarkably inexpensive.

D B CUNDALL


A whole book devoted to a single disease must suggest to many that the finished product will be a detailed text written for a small number of highly specialised clinicians or research workers. Professor Emery's book is detailed and could without doubt be of interest to such a group of readers, but to many others besides. Sir John Walton in his Foreword cites a wide range of professionals, not all of them medical, that he thinks would find something of interest within this book. I agree with him.

Professor Emery's monograph on Duchenne muscular dystrophy begins with an introduction to some general principles on the development and morphology of muscle followed by an interesting account of the historical aspects of the disease. Subsequent chapters cover the clinical features, the diagnosis, differential diagnosis, discussion of the involvement of tissues other than skeletal muscle, the biochemistry of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, pathogenesis, genetics, molecular pathology, prevention, genetic counselling, and management. There are seven appendices and each chapter has a short summary. A comprehensive and apparently well chosen bibliography is provided and this includes a large number of references to publications within the last two years.

The style of the book is attractive and it is enjoyable to read although typographical errors are quite common.

The account of the molecular pathology of Duchenne muscular dystrophy is a fine example of how a complex and rapidly changing subject is presented in a form that should be comprehensible to most readers. And it is very up to date. The large chapter on management succeeds in striking a realistic balance, for the most part, between the varying thoughts of different schools on what cannot avoid being an emotive topic. I believe that this is a book that should be available in every paediatric library and that all of those that have any role in the diagnosis and management of children with neuromuscular disease should be made aware of its existence and encourage Book 2, reviews paediatric neurological disease, including infections, tumours, traumatic and metabolic diseases, and management issues (neurosurgical referral, respiratory failure, counselling, neuroradiology).

The 40 contributors, half of whom work in Manchester, range from neurologists and neurosurgeons (predominant in book 2) to psychologists, social workers, geneticists, and other therapists. The intention is to update neurological management, and book 1 is aimed not only at doctors, but
The general effect of reading these volumes straight through is of attending a large multidisciplinary symposium. There is repetition, extreme variation in style, content, and complexity. Some contributors use that lame phrase, ‘space does not permit. . .’ others describe, with detailed tables, obscure neurological rarities. Other authors forget that ‘treatment and management’ is their remit. There is a shortage of editorial attention, though they appear once (in square brackets) as referees during a virulent dismissal of signing for deaf children—maybe to placate its advocates elsewhere. Book 1, too often, is discursive, with a stately vagueness, (‘not infrequent’, ‘relatively common’) and insufficient contemporary data and controlled results of intervention. David Taylor's characteristic contributions are delightful—his case histories are compelling—but he needed reminding not to tell the same story twice. Textbooks are best not produced in two volumes, and without a common index. These 930 pages could be reduced to 500, using the ruthlessness of journal editors, some chapters can be jettisoned. The paperback volumes, however, are remarkably cheap, and include contributions that are well researched, packed with contemporary references, and of immediate help in the management of ill and handicapped children.

J W PARTRIDGE


In the first half of this book Dr Buckler describes the events of puberty while the second part contains information about the associated features of adolescence. As one would expect from this author, the former is comprehensively dealt with while the latter contains an account of many of the problems that may concern a teenager. The views expressed are those of a caring parent as well as those of a specialist in growth and development. I was particularly impressed at the sensitive way in which the more delicate subject matter was discussed. It is unfortunate that adolescent medicine is poorly represented in the United Kingdom and many associated problems fall in between the specialities of paediatrics and adult medicine. Fortunately, Dr Buckler's book provides much material to unify these subjects.

I was delighted that large sections of the text were devoted to psychological development. My main criticism, however, is that important issues such as drug dependency, contraception, and unwanted pregnancy were allocated an inappropriately short discussion and, of greater importance, practical guidance was limited.

There have been several books about adolescence published recently but I believe this to be one of the better ones. The cost is reasonable, especially considering this is a hardback edition. Although written primarily for parents and associated health workers, I am sure this book will be most eagerly received by teenagers themselves, to whom I shall have no hesitation in recommending it.

R STANHOPE


This short book is designed to be read while waiting for laboratory results or watching an ill patient; it will be a great help to all those who have that responsibility. It provides uncomplicated advice on choosing the correct biochemical tests, the accurate interpretation of the results, and the safe, immediate treatment of a sick child. The first third of the book considers the theoretical principles governing fluid balance, the normal mechanisms of regulation, and the aetiology of pathological states. The terminology is simply defined. The tables and figures are outstandingly clear. The calculations of normal needs and abnormal replacements are provided, and the enteral route is not considered outdated. The rest of the book discusses the commoner circumstances in which the body's regulatory mechanisms become disordered: gastroenteritis, diabetes mellitus, kidney disease, adrenocortical failure, hypercalcaemia, poisoning, and surgery. There is a particularly helpful chapter by Mr R W Griffiths on the burned child, which recognises that most of these problems are not dealt with by paediatricians. The sections on calcium and parenteral feeding are short and rather disappointing, but overall several quarts of guidance have become an excellent pinta. It will be worth keeping a copy on each paediatric ward.

A N STANTON


This is an unusual book containing 20 poems and 52 full page pencil drawings of babies done by an American artist in a neonatal intensive care unit in Copenhagen. The drawings show babies in incubators with tubes and all resuscitation equipment; the size of the children is often shown by contrast with the hands of the nurses. The drawings are competent and of variable quality with tone values much like those of the well known books of drawings by Dowd, but she has barely Dowd's facile skill. The poems are accompaniments or substitutes for drawings. The whole gives a fascinating insight into an artist's view of a situation usually only recorded by a nurse or doctor or by an involved relative. Some of the poems have beautiful passages such as 'Any kind/of life is life/but here the event conceals all questioning/ . . . ' and ' . . . on the screen, this tiny green snake/of her life whips and whips and whips'.

This is not a happy book any more than any other book on human tragedy is, but it is a true work of art in that it will leave every reader a little more thoughtful and a little different. It is an excellent book to give to someone who has lived through an intensive care ward; I can see many neonatologists being given a copy from a 'grateful patient'.

JOHN L EMERY