Book reviews

Harries' Paediatric Gastroenterology. 2nd ed. Edited by P J Milla and D P R Muller. Pp 601: £50 hardback. Churchill Livingstone, 1988. ISBN 0-443-03058-8.

John Harries is described by his colleagues, the editors of this second edition, as 'a remarkable man who . . . showed us that clinical practice combined with laboratory research could be stimulating, rewarding and above all, fun'. All of us who ever worked with him can only agree and this book echoes those qualities.

It has been greatly expanded and now includes among its contributors several distinguished transatlantic gastroenterologists. The first of its four sections deals with basic science and investigatory techniques; the second and third contain a series of individual contributions on particular clinical problems involving the alimentary tract and liver; the final part deals with oral and parenteral nutrition. The editors claim it is primarily written with general paediatricians in mind. Their objective is fulfilled in so far as it provides comprehensive coverage and thorough bibliographies of the subjects dealt with. Individual references are as recent as 1987. Those of us who deal only occasionally with patients suffering from chronic inflammatory bowel disease or chronic liver disease, for example, can use this work to tap the brains respectively of Richard Grand and Ian Booth and of Alex Mowat.

Alan Lucas provides an excellent update on gut hormones and adaptation to extra-uterine nutrition. Common conditions are not ignored with chapters on surgical emergencies, irritable bowel syndrome, and acute and protracted diarrhoea.

If there is any caveat, it is that the rigid nature of any system specialty means that diseases which cross systems may be dealt with less thoroughly. Ill defined conditions, such as food intolerance, which have not yet landed themselves squarely in any particular specialty, are dealt with rather nervously by a number of contributors. It is likely still to be in fashion by the third edition so let's hope it merits its own chapter. As with all multiauthor works, some chapters are more analytic than others. For example, the possible relationship of anal fissure and child sex abuse is mentioned in a single sentence referring to

Hobbs and Wynne's work but without any discussion.

This is a first rate book. It deserves a place in every paediatric ward library just as John Harries deserves a place in our hearts.

H MARCOVITCH
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
*Horton General Hospital,
Banbury, Oxfordshire*

Paediatric Gastroenterology. 2nd ed. Edited by C M Anderson, V Burke, and M Gracey. Pp 917: £95 hardback. Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1987. ISBN 0-867-93176.

This is the largest of three new editions of paediatric gastroenterology textbooks published in 1987. Like its first edition 13 years ago *Paediatric Gastroenterology* by Anderson, Burke, and Gracey, aims to be a comprehensive reference text dealing with normal and abnormal function of the child's gastrointestinal tract. Its 18 contributors are senior figures in paediatric gastroenterology, able to give illuminating historical introductions to their sections and to write from large and long personal experience. Carre's description of hiatus hernia, for example, includes a study of 710 children, 80 for more than 30 years.

Chapters on the oropharynx, oesophagus, and stomach (Carre, Dodge) thoroughly review their physiology and disorders. A valuable chapter on endoscopy will require an additional section on endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography in future editions. There is an excellent review of small bowel physiology, with leading authorities (Walker, Burke, Auricchio, Brueton, Gracey) discussing development, digestion, brush border enzymes, immunology, and microflora, respectively. Infective diarrhoea and gut infection and parasitisation (Gracey, Burke, Grove, Keusch) are rightly given prominence. Professor Anderson writes with authority upon the approach to the child with abnormal stools, and on coeliac disease, cystic fibrosis, and inflammatory bowel disease. Chapters on the radiology of the gut (Astley, Gates) and on the pancreas (Hadorn, Munch) were particularly good.

Inevitably the critical reviewer can find some omissions, such as the role of pH studies and of cisapride in gastro-oesophageal reflux, and some topical areas which merit fuller discussion, such as the use of rice powder in rehydration solutions and of elemental diets in the treatment of Crohn's disease. The description (and picture) of a baby chair for postural treatment of reflux rather than the prone position will irritate some oesophagologists. Books on the gut traditionally include a section on the liver (although the converse is not true) so setting the contributor the impossible task of providing a comprehensive review of a major specialty in one chapter.

Despite these quibbles, this is an invaluable reference book for the practising paediatrician faced with a gastroenterological problem, and its value is enhanced by its thorough and recent literature citations and by excellent illustrations. It is undoubtedly an essential medical library purchase. I hope the third edition will be less tardy.

M S TANNER
SENIOR LECTURER IN CHILD HEALTH
University of Leicester

Child Sexual Abuse Within the Family: Assessment and Treatment. Edited by A Bentovim. Pp 319: £19.50 softback. Butterworth Scientific, 1988. ISBN 7236-0634-X.

A timely book on an unspeakable and hidden problem, which helps to break the taboo that sex abuse must not be talked about. There is an extremely good opening chapter on definitions and normal sexual behaviour both in children and adults. I found the chapter on family functioning complicated and also naive, with little recognition of the fact that perpetrators by and large suffer from a compulsive behaviour disorder; an addiction, and go on abusing until they cannot get away with it. Many really prefer sex with children.

The chapter on recognition and assessment was good apart from the medical section, which I thought rather overlooked the holistic assessment (emotional behaviour, developmental as well as the general and specific physical forensic

examination); and concentrated rather more on the 'knicker up/down' approach. Certainly they did emphasise that buggery is much more common than previously suspected, as is sexual abuse of boys.

The chapters on helping young children describing their experiences and family assessments were good. The chapter on the group therapeutic work is excellent, and with further experience in the field, may produce part of a therapeutic input that indeed may have great influence on family healing.

In summary, patchy, but quite excellent in part.

H RICHARDSON
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
*Community Health and Mental
Handicap Services,
Canterbury*

A Practical Approach to Pediatric Otolaryngology. By C M Myer III and R T Cotton. Pp 247: £28.50 paperback. Wolfe Medical, 1988. ISBN 0-8151-1865-1.

There are very few books available specifically on paediatric otolaryngology which is, perhaps, surprising in view of the number of children who present to general practitioners and paediatricians with disorders of the ear, nose, and throat. Myer and Cotton have produced a readable book which all doctors who look after children will find useful. They sensibly assume a low level of basic knowledge and the first chapter is devoted to the anatomy of the relevant structures and their examination. After this is a brief chapter on audiological examination that summarises the methods available and emphasises their shortcomings, particularly in very young children. The remainder of the book deals with disorders of the ear, nose, and throat in a problem orientated way. As well as chapters on otitis media, nasal obstruction, dizziness, and other topics one would expect to find,

the authors have extended their brief to include sections on language disorders, facial paralysis, and salivary gland disease. The result is a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, book that encourages a logical approach to the disorders encountered in everyday practice and perhaps most importantly, indicates when specialised help should be sought.

The book has few failings. All the illustrations are in monochrome and of generally good quality but photographs of the tympanic membrane and of the larynx would have been greatly enhanced by colour. There are several useful algorithms but it is difficult to follow some of these because of their small print size. There is an otherwise useful chapter on facial trauma in which no mention is made of non-accidental injury and its characteristic physical signs. Nevertheless, I would recommend this book to general practitioners and the libraries of paediatric and accident and emergency departments.

J R JAMES
LECTURER IN PAEDIATRICS
*Leeds General Infirmary,
Leeds*

Assuring Quality Out-Patient Care for Children. Guidelines and a Management System. By C D Cook and J Heidt. Pp 197: £27.50 hardback. Oxford University Press, 1988.

Although readable and interesting, the title of this American book is misleading. It bears no relationship to my own hospital outpatient practice. It is about a computerised management system that involves guidelines, decision trees, structured encounter forms, and parent education material—for acute conditions that are usually dealt with in this country at the primary care level or as a direct acute hospital admission. It costs \$35 000 per hospital to implement and \$7.85 per case!

The book is based on the authors' experience of this system in a downstate New York paediatric ambulatory care service, which is dealing with 200–600 walk in patients daily. The patients often had to wait up to six hours to be seen by the next available paediatrician of whom there are over 100 working in a given month! Eighty per cent of the patients present with either upper respiratory infections, pneumonia, diarrhoea and vomiting, acute abdominal pain, urinary tract infections, wheezing, or seizures. The whole book, therefore, is directed solely at these disorders.

Although an immense amount of work has been achieved, the approach is typically American—for example, the decision trees are branched with cut off values for age, specific temperatures, and the proverbial white cell count and its shift to the left. Specific drug therapies are often not pertinent to this country—for example, salbutamol is not part of their armamentarium for the treatment of asthma. Otherwise most of their management strategies and guidelines I would have little to disagree about. The parent education chapter particularly contains useful material that we could all use. I was disappointed that the ingredients of the 'pudding' take up the first 182 pages, yet the results of implementing the system and the 'proof in the eating' is covered in just over nine pages. What few data they give are impressive, showing better antibiotic prescribing, improved clinical recording of information, and a decrease in the number of investigations ordered.

The book would be better entitled 'Standard Setting and Performance in General Practice' but as the authors state on the last page that 'the system cannot be a substitute for inadequate resources' I cannot see that its aims could ever be achieved in this country, however laudable. Don't waste your money!

E J EASTHAM
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
*Royal Victoria Infirmary,
Newcastle upon Tyne*