British obstetric practice. The rest of the book covers maternal disorders of pregnancy—400 pages—almost a book unto itself. The editors have failed in this section to curtail the ramblings of one or two authors both in their verbosity and their preoccupation with their own research. However, in contrast there are some excellent chapters in this section and the one on the critically ill patient covers some useful areas often missing in such texts.

For the obstetrician, this would be a good reference for those developing a special interest in fetal medicine. The paediatrician might find it useful for keeping his obstetric colleagues on their toes.

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Neuromuscular Diseases. 2nd ed. By M Swash and MS Schwartz. Pp 456: £99 hardback. Springer-Verlag, London, 1988. ISBN 0-387-19505-x.

This is the second edition of this successful book on diagnosis and management. The

book has been considerably expanded and has now developed into a quite formidable tome. There are the expected chapters on the inherited disorders including the muscular dystrophies, the spinal muscular atrophies, the myotonic disorders, and the congenital myopathies, to name just a few. In addition there are chapters on mononeuropathies, nerve root and plexus lesions, acquired polyneuropathies, the myasthenic syndrome, inflammatory disorders, endocrine myopathies, toxic myopathies, cardiomyopathies, and other clinical problems.

The text is clear, clinical descriptions are excellent, as is advice on differential diagnosis. Clinical photographs are well chosen. One of the authors has an interest in muscle and nerve pathology and the book contains many excellent photomicrographs and electronmicrographs. The other author has an interest in neurophysiology, and as well as a separate chapter on this subject, the text is peppered with useful advice on electrodiagnosis.

The book is impressively comprehensive, such that the chapter on disorders of the anterior horn cell deals not only with the common childhood types of spinal muscular atrophy but also mentions nine rare forms. The muscular dystrophies get similar treatment. The chapters on the mononeuropathies and the brachial and lumbar nerve root lesions are welcome. These are rare in childhood, are difficult to investigate, and

it is useful to find comprehensive coverage of them.

Despite this extensive coverage, the book is not specifically paediatrically orientated. Thus sections on physical management and rehabilitation are not comprehensive. I cannot agree with the recommendation on steroid management of juvenile dermatomyositis, and the literature is not adequately quoted on this most important subject. The otherwise excellent chapter on myasthenia devotes relatively little space to the congenital syndromes. The authors recommend open muscle biopsy, which is going out of fashion in children, although they discuss needle biopsy. The emphasis on electromyography is not so practical when investigating children, and the authors dismiss ultrasound imaging of muscle as an alternative. They do not, for example, discuss the problems of investigating patients with selective muscle involvement.

This book is noteworthy for its excellent and comprehensive coverage of neuromuscular disorders, which are less common in childhood but are a major problem of management when they do occur. It complements rather than replaces existing paediatric texts on the subject.

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