Milk Substitutes agreed in the end may prove to be unique of its kind.

The editor, Professor John Dobbing, himself contributes two chapters to the book including the epilogue. His earlier chapter gives a commentary on the charges made and, in doing so, provides a concise but clear account of the necessity for breast milk substitutes given the premise that breast feeding is best if possible. It could be read with value by all those concerned with infant feeding.

He calls upon two coauthors, one an American business writer and public affairs analyst, the other a French novelist and investigative journalist. Both have been particularly interested in the infant food controversy since 1981. Between them they give a clear account of the history of the controversy from its beginnings to its resolution and, while this account perhaps shows Nestlé as the predominantly injured party, neither author apparently has an axe to grind so the account must be regarded as balanced.

While this book is perhaps not one which might be expected to be found in every paediatric library, it is well worth being read by anyone with an interest in infant feeding. The necessity for breast milk substitutes will remain with us indefinitely, and an understanding of the conflict between interested parties provided by this book may help to prevent such damaging and drawn out argument in the future.

J ALLGROVE
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
Newham General Hospital,
Plaistow, London

Paediatric Data Interpretation. By J Walter, S Lenton, and C M Gabriel. Pp 189: £7.95 paperback. Butterworth Scientific, 1987. ISBN 0-407-00425-4.

This is a carefully written book of 139 data interpretation questions of the type used in the MRCP Part II written section. In the second part of the book the answers are given with a reasonably comprehensive discussion on why these are correct. References are made to the appropriate pages of the standard textbooks in most cases but occasionally to useful review articles. The authors give only the correct answers and not the nearly correct ones. The recognition of a reasonable but not ideal answer would have given them an opportunity to have reviewed the differential diagnosis more

fully in the discussion and would have been a more accurate simulation of the real examination where we believe examiners award at least some marks for less than perfect answers.

This book is more than just an examination practice resource. Many paediatricians would find attempting the questions entertaining and helpful in demonstrating to them areas of their own knowledge which are a little thin. The subjects covered are obviously selected by the nature of the data which can be printed in the book. There are examples of most of the laboratory reports that might have arrived on paediatric units in an average year as well as electrocardiograms, electroencephalograms, audiograms, centile charts, family trees, renal scans, cardiac catheter results, etc. Practising paediatricians would find this a stimulating and exacting exercise with sufficient detail in the discussion of the answers to provide a helpful update or reminder.

This book is a valuable resource for paediatricians in training who are preparing for the MRCP Part II and an entertaining method of revision and update for the rest of us.

G S CLAYDEN
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
St Thomas's Hospital,
London SE1 7EH

Textbook of Pediatric Gastroenterology. Edited by M Silverberg and F Daum. Pp 511: £34.00 hardback. Wolfe Medical, 1987. ISBN 0-815-176-821.

The second edition of this relatively short, multiauthor textbook aims to provide basic and practical information of interest to all clinicians caring for children with gastrointestinal disorders and hopes to be of value to a wider readership including 'medical students, academic faculty, basic scientists, allied health personnel and surgeons'. Hepatic disorders are excluded, although there are chapters on bile acid metabolism and the exocrine pancreas. Normal and abnormal nutrition, surgical emergencies in infancy, and laboratory methods are also covered in separate chapters. The authors, all from centres in the United States and experts in their field, have certainly succeeded in providing up to date medical information in a clear, compact, and uncluttered text. Succinct summaries of morphological and physiological information help to clarify points of clinical

relevance. Flow diagrams, photomicrographs, clinical photographs, and radiographs amplify the text, which is well referenced with an up to date bibliography.

The general paediatrician, confronted with a gastrointestinal problem, will find much of practical value in this book and may well be tempted to delve further. The paediatric gastroenterologist will find clear and useful summaries of gastrointestinal topics. At £34 this book is excellent value for money and should certainly be in the local postgraduate centre library.

N EVANS
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
Royal Alexandra Hospital
for Sick Children,
Brighton BN1 3JN

Handbook of Child Health Assessment. Biopsychosocial Perspectives. By Paul Karoly. Pp 677: no price stated, hardback. John Wiley, 1988.

This book gives an interesting insight into the developing field of child health psychology. Like its subject matter it is more of an emergent than a tangible accomplishment, but it should make useful reading for its main target readership of psychologists and sociologists.

It follows a multiauthor format and is written largely by North American psychologists. It covers a wide and even diverse variety of areas. Among others, there are reviews on the psychological aspects of chronic illness in childhood, on abdominal pains, children's responses to hospitalisation, child health concepts, on assessing risk for addictive behaviours in adolescence, and on accident prevention. As implied in the title, there are a number of chapters devoted to the assessment of the sick child, detailing an enormous array of psychological tests (neuropsychological and psychophysiological, educational, 'cognitive-behavioural', on temperament, personality and social skills, family function). It was intriguing to see that there is a family 'hardiness' index and even a FAPGAR or family Apgar test!

There are some drawbacks in the approach reflected in the book. The diversity of the subject matter results in an apparent lack of cohesion and direction, the abundant use of tests and questionnaires makes it seem mechanical and at times superfluous, and it is sometimes difficult to see the clinical relevance of