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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 multi-author format and is written largely by North American psychologists. It covers a wide and even disperse 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 behaviour 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 ‘hardness’ 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 psychology and medicine into clinical practice.

This means that the handbook is largely an important one for practising professionals, and the book would be useful in the library of anyone in the field. The chapters are mainly theoretical in nature and few are very practical. The book is a very useful one for understanding the current status of the assessment of child health.

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The second edition of this relatively short, multi-author 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.

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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. Practicing 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.

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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.
some comments made—for example, those related to children's concepts about health and illness—interesting as the comments are in themselves. Most chapters, however, particularly those dealing with the better trodden areas such as chronic health problems, recurrent pains or temperament, are informative and well written, and the book is certainly a good source of reference on psychological tests!

E Garralda
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This book sets out to be of interest to professionals in early education, medicine, child care, and child psychology. In attempting to cater to such a wide range of readers, there is a difficulty in that background information will differ in each group. The editors state that no previous knowledge of psychology is assumed. In addition, all subjects are treated in such a basic and simple way that this text will be most suited to beginners in their discipline. Others will require more depth, irritated perhaps by oversimplification. That is more noticeable in the early chapters and the book improves as it goes on.

The topics covered include family relationships, social factors, development, language, behaviour disorders and their management (perhaps the best in the book), learning difficulties, play, failure to thrive, and child abuse—physical and sexual—together with a useful chapter summarising provisions for day care away from home and child care law. Each chapter is followed by a reading list.

There is a general tendency throughout the book to equate disability and behaviour disorder with social disadvantage and while that is largely true, there are some problems for the well to do that here receive no mention.

I would like to see a version of the book written for more advanced readers. Meanwhile, some chapters will help junior staff preparing for the Diploma in Child Health. The book will have more appeal to non-medical readers in the field of child care.

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The title suggests a textbook, but it is neither a textbook nor a satisfactory reference book. To be fair it does not set out to be either but is simply a series of essays in 35 relatively short chapters. There are some distinguished authors, mostly from the Antipodes but also from North America, Britain, and Ireland.

Most chapters review advances and recent thought on broad topics. Practical detail is, inevitably, omitted and they are, therefore, more suited to browsing than use with specific clinical problems. Some important matters receive only a brief discussion—for example, retroental fibroplasia and bronchopulmonary dysplasia are each discussed in six lines, and congenital hip dislocation and Perthes' disease even less—so brief that one is left wondering why they were mentioned at all.

As might be expected, the work of 40 contributors lends itself to a curate's egg effect. Some parts are good and I am pleased to say that the two chapters I liked best were from Britain. There were also good accounts of hypertension and hyperactivity, a thoughtful effort on accidental prevention, and some interesting data on childhood infections. Of most practical use were chapters on dermatology and ophthalmology, both well illustrated and keeping with the good standard of production of the book.

Disappointment prevailed on reading about child abuse that 'has been present in society for many hundreds of years' but is 'relatively newly recognised' by the medical profession. Likewise, with a rather woolly account of adolescence. Adolescent sexuality is rightly given a separate chapter, but it contains little practical guidance on management and the issue of consent on contraception, so recently topical in Britain, is not even mentioned.

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This is a major new multi-author two-volume textbook from North America where paediatric dermatology is better established as a specialty than in the United Kingdom. The 32 chapters cover all aspects of paediatric dermatology, from the common to very rare problems. The book's disadvantages are the relative lack of diagnostic and therapeutic advice (especially weak for common disorders such as eczema and psoriasis) and the patchy illustrations, many of which are in black and white.

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