

in a seemingly hopeless situation, has reinforced the myth of human immortality. This is most marked during the perinatal period, where the possibility of an outcome other than happy is dismissed or subjugated. This tome discusses in a dispassionate and well argued fashion the risks attached to successful procreation.

Medical audit presently enjoys a profile as high as that of the environment on the political agenda and we are introduced to the necessary concepts in a lucid and understandable form, despite considerable statistical content. Thereafter, the various stages of procreation are discussed in a temporal progression until medical audit is discussed from a practical viewpoint as the final offering. Clinical geneticists are still a rare breed, the genetics chapter is well written and contains sufficient data for clinicians to embark on genetic counselling with substantiated facts easily accessible.

Condensing a large topic into a handbook renders the authors open to sins of commission as well as omission.

Two chapters: 'Risk at the booking visit' and 'Risk and the neonate' were uncomfortable—couldn't decide whether to be a textbook or not and included considerable but incomplete data—which leaves the reader insecure at taking advice from these chapters. The list of prescribing in pregnancy is incomplete, so loses authority and becomes useless as a basis for prescribing.

The chapter on labour separates overall risks into component parts, which affords a worthwhile basis for targetting resources in attempts to reduce mortality in areas where this is feasible. Interestingly the reference discussing neonatal intensive care and mental retardation is far later than the seminal work of Brimblecombe *et al* from Exeter. Apgar scores and cardiocographs, forming part of the obstetric/paediatric interface, have their merits and demerits well ventilated. The controversy of caesarean section and preterm labour, however, is dismissed with references, while prolonged labour is blessed with a largely historical treatise. The problems of the neonate are potentially legion and the salient areas should be chosen with care. Inclusion of simplistic and somewhat worthless information is an ill afforded luxury in this book and the chapter failed to impress.

The book attempts, mostly successfully, to encompass the multifaceted problem of pregnancy and will be useful to obstetrician and paediatrician alike. It is easily read, enjoyable, but factual without tedium or verbosity.

S J ROSE
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
East Birmingham Hospital

Edmond Went Far Away. By Martin Bax, illustrated by Michael Foreman. Pp 40: £8.95 hardback. Walker Books, 1988. ISBN 0-7445-1060-0.

The perfect bedtime story is one that keeps parents awake and sends children to sleep. This story is written by a paediatrician and is about Edmond who lives in a farm house. He says goodbye to all his animal friends and goes on a long walk. First he goes through a copse patting the trees goodbye, then down a muddy path, and finally he climbs up a long hill. This took him a long time and on the way he imagines that all his animal friends are with him.

When he got to the top of the hill he looked down at the new world on the other side and began to panic slightly because he wasn't sure whether to go home or not. A familiar figure caught his eye and he was pleased to see that it was his father who had followed him. They explored the new world together, rowing round a lake, building a fire of driftwood, eating baked beans, and spending the night in sleeping bags. The next day when Edmond returned home from his adventure his animal friends were very pleased to see him and I suppose his mother was too.

When I first looked at the book the part that stood out most were the wonderful illustrations which made the story come to life. Although they weren't greatly detailed they were colourful and very effective. This is an ideal bedtime story book, read by either parents or children. It is suitable for 5-7 year olds, although younger ones might have difficulty with some of the words. The good thing is that there is no moral to the story. Children don't want morals at bed-

time and this story is far more enjoyable without one.

LINDSEY CHISHOLM
Manchester

Video review

Screening and Surveillance for Hearing Impairment in Young Children. Nottingham Health Authority, 1987. Video Training Package, £98.50.

The detection of hearing impairment in young children over the country as a whole is poorly carried out, and this is confirmed by the late ages of diagnosis of many of the deaf children. This screening package is an excellent aid for local authorities who are trying to improve the outcome of their screening programmes and will be a useful supplement to pre-existing training.

The package consists of two parts: a trainers' manual that sets out the essential activities that have to be taught on the programme and the recommended time for the training modules, including a full day of practical training. The second part of the package is the video, which illustrates clearly the points raised in the training manual and is excellent teaching material, although insufficient for use on its own. The video and manual cover all aspects of the distraction test, including potential problems, in a concise manner and if the recommendations are followed I am sure that there will be a marked improvement in the detection of hearing loss.

There are some sections that need to be expanded but this can be carried out by the trainer during the various activity sessions. The manual stresses the fact that the trainer should be appropriately trained and experienced in hearing screening techniques and this needs to be emphasised if local authorities are to implement this training package. Given this prerequisite, however, I would highly recommend this as an aid to training health visitors and other professionals involved in screening children's hearing.

S BELLMAN
CONSULTANT AUDIOLOGICAL PHYSICIAN
*Hospital for Sick Children,
London*