

Despite the title important soft tissue injuries are not overlooked. Dr Ogden discusses the affect of athletics in its broad context in relation to the developing skeleton, which is becoming a flourishing and important area. One minor criticism is the author has continued to talk of arterial spasm consequent to injury without stressing that spasm always represents intra-arterial damage.

This book will stimulate further thought on children's trauma and will provide interesting reading for both the training and the trained orthopaedic surgeon and accident and emergency officers. One can unequivocally recommend it as a 'must' for the libraries of all hospitals where injured children are treated.

L KLENERMAN  
*Professor of orthopaedic  
and accident surgery*

**Paediatric Forensic Medicine and Pathology.** Edited by JK Mason. (Pp 516; £75 hard-back.) Chapman and Hall Ltd, 1989. ISBN 0-412-29160-6.

Many paediatricians are reluctant to get involved with medicolegal problems and cite the extra work involved in the preparation of reports, and interruption of clinical practice to attend court at short notice, as reasons for not doing so. Such reasons are undoubtedly valid, but are often an excuse to avoid exposure to an

alien sometimes hostile environment, with, perhaps, a perceived risk of public humiliation. The unfamiliar is often daunting, and with this in mind, Professor Mason brings together contributors from diverse branches of medical and legal practice, forensic science, and philosophy, to address a variety of problems, which however unwelcome, have become part of contemporary paediatric practice.

Chapter I examines the role of the expert witness, with emphasis on problems particular to paediatrics. It addresses some of those areas which create most unease. The second, and the longest section, comprises 22 chapters, covering forensic paediatric medicine and pathology. It looks at several aspects of child abuse in detail, including emotional abuse, as well as sexual, and non-sexual physical abuse, and poisoning. Accidents, iatrogenic deaths, and problems surrounding withdrawal of intensive care are also covered. Parentage testing, medicolegal aspects of genetic counselling, and HIV infection are also addressed. The predominantly pathological subjects covered include the examination of stillbirths, identification of dead, abandoned babies, concealment at birth, sudden death in children, sudden unexpected infant death, and the pathology of non-accidental injury. There is noticeable reiteration among these contributions, particularly in relation to postmortem examination; all the more notable as reiteration is minimal in the clinical chapters. One chapter on postmortem examination is, surprisingly, unreferenced. This is inappropriate in a postgraduate text, particularly as the justification for methods described is by no means universally accepted by practising paediatric pathologists.

Legal aspects covered include death certification, parental rights, child protection, and abortion. These chapters are carefully constructed, and they contrast differences between (and within) the UK and North America. They are easy to read, devoid of legal jargon, and highlight problems important in clinical practice.

The concluding chapters examine ethical problems related to research, experimentation involving children, and current paediatric practice; although specific ethical problems are discussed within other chapters. The book concludes with lists of cases, statutes, weights, and measurements.

This book fulfills a real need both for paediatricians and pathologists. There are few typographical errors (table 1.1 has the best one) and few textual inaccuracies. At £75 it is not expensive and will amply repay your investment. It might enhance your confidence in court and will certainly help you serve your patients better.

J W KEELING  
*Consultant paediatric pathologist*