

and more discussion on the primary health care team involvement in health protection. Continuation of the practice established in earlier chapters of suggestions for 'further reading' would also have been useful after the later chapters.

Paediatricians involved with training for surveillance will be encouraged to know that the authors, the Child Growth Foundation, Radcliffe Medical Press, and others are developing a series of training packages to complement this book and covering other aspects of child health care. I look forward to reviewing them.

SIMON LENTON
Community paediatrician

Handbook of Paediatric Dermatology. 2nd Ed. By John Harper. (Pp 228; £29.50 hardback.) Butterworth-Heinemann, 1990. ISBN 0-750-61027-1.

'Harper's handbook' will now be even more popular. The winning combination being quality colour photographs with equally clear and succinct text.

This new edition has up to date illustrations and accounts of child abuse, prenatal diagnosis, Lyme disease, Kawasaki's disease, and a new chapter on tropical dermatoses. The references and appendices have been updated throughout, including a useful list of British and American patient support groups.

Notably, in the five years since the first edition, the incidence of infantile eczema has been changed from 1-3% to 5-10%. In line with present confusion, the advice that breast feeding 'has been shown to decrease the risk of eczema' has been changed to 'breast feeding should be encouraged but there is no evidence that this reduces the risk of eczema'.

As a paediatrician in training I felt this book gave me no guidance on the profound effects of skin disease on growing children, and how to handle them. Eczema treatment is directed to the skin rather than to the child. Until we

can cure the chronic skin diseases we must surely be prepared to treat the resulting distress.

A recent rival (Verbov's *Essential Paediatric Dermatology*) provides a more personal anecdotal approach. Equally beautifully illustrated, this book contains many useful tips such as: how to discourage itchy children from scratching, and lice in eyelashes are usually pubic so check the parents. However in achieving this Verbov's book is necessarily more verbose and less comprehensive.

'Harper's handbook' will remain essential to students taking final MB, DCH, and especially membership. Its clarity and brevity make it pleasurable reading cover to cover. Moreover the efficient index and organisation will make it the chosen reference companion to all paediatricians, dermatologists, and general practitioners caring for children with skin disorders.

BENJAMIN JACOBS
Paediatric registrar