

the ocular compression test is used to confirm a diagnosis of anoxic seizures.

In the remaining chapters the book provides information on other causes of loss of consciousness and ends with a section on the management of fits and faints. There are comprehensive accounts of 'psychic and psychogenic seizures', 'funny turns and funny attacks' and 'fits and faints in a special setting'. Prognosis and management are discussed in general terms with emphasis on the history and clinical findings. Some mention is made about future research in drug treatment.

I welcome this book which stimulates questions about seizure disorders in childhood. It is a useful guide to those seeking a better understanding of such disorders as the information contained will provide insights about a range of conditions associated with loss of consciousness. It will also be a valuable addition to the university library in order to encourage the application of research to the clinical situation.

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Pediatric AIDS. Edited by Philip A Pizzo, Catherine M Wilfert. (Pp 813; £56.50 hardback.) Williams and Wilkins Ltd, 1991. ISBN 0-683-06894-6.

It is less than 10 years ago that the first report was published of a child with AIDS from the USA. AIDS in children is now one of the leading causes of death in the USA, is a major contributor to increasing infant mortality in places such as Africa, the Caribbean and some parts of South America, and is now appearing in most countries in the world. This is the first major textbook on paediatric AIDS and comes not surprisingly from the USA. It is written by leading experts in the American field and it is a credit to the editors that they managed to produce this book in such a short period of time, containing as it does so much up to date information.

The value of this book will be twofold. Firstly as a major reference for paediatricians who are directly involved in the field both clinically and from the research aspect (although likely to become out of date quickly in such a fastly changing field, it will be an invaluable summary of knowledge so far). Secondly it is a book which many libraries would do well to keep as increasingly all paediatricians are going to come across the problem of paediatric HIV.

The sections on clinical manifestation and treatment fill more than half the book. They detail and cover infectious complications and organ specific complications. The chapter on the epidemiology and perinatally acquired HIV (chapter 1) and treatment considerations (chapter 34) are excellent reviews of those aspects of the disease. Not surprisingly, perhaps, in such a large and rapidly produced book, there is some repetition and even occasional contradiction between authors of different chapters and further editing to reduce this would have been welcome.

My non-medical colleagues have commented that this is a very medical textbook. The complex psychosocial, family and public policy issues are covered in the last chapters of the book but in a not very inspiring way. They are 'very American' and may not be so relevant for other cultures and health care systems.

This is a tome of a book but to be welcomed as the first major book on HIV in children.

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Worldwide Variation in Human Growth. 2nd Ed. Edited by Phyllis B Eveleth and James M Tanner. (Pp 397; £25.00 paperback, £60 hardback.) Cambridge University Press, 1991. ISBN 0-521-35916-3 (p/b), 0-521-35024-7 (h/b).

There can be few books which provide such a complete coverage of any scientific subject as this. To present in one volume, in a form acceptable and assimilable to a reader, vast quantities of data from hundreds of growth studies, undertaken in over 40 countries with differing methodology, may seem wellnigh impossible, but the editors have achieved this. The first edition, published in 1976, was a monumental undertaking, and largely the outcome of 10 years of studies under the auspices of the International Biological Programme. Now the editors have repeated their work, achieving the same standard of excellence and admirable presentation. So many new data have been forthcoming since the completion of the previous programme, through more sophisticated and extensive studies from all over the world, that this second edition largely replaces the first. There are only occasional references to the earlier studies when nothing has subsequently superseded them. This volume, which includes all serious studies of child growth from 1974-88, is by far the largest series of growth data ever assembled, and discusses growth in terms of height, weight, skinfolds, limb circumferences, and skeletal diameters.

As in the previous edition the book is introduced by a description of methods and standards for comparative growth studies. In the ensuing six chapters the authors discuss comparisons of growth patterns between races, both in their native environments and following migration to other continents. A further section considers population differences in the rate of maturation as shown by skeletal, dental and pubertal development, and knowledge of these aspects in particular has increased dramatically over these recent years. The significance and relative roles of genetic and environmental (notably nutritional) influences in explaining the differences in growth patterns shown by these studies is evaluated in further chapters—the genetic component from two main aspects—family likenesses, and large group comparisons of Europeans, Africans, and Asiatics. The final chapter is new to this edition, considering how susceptibility to disease relates to growth and development and the outcome in adult life. The essentials of the raw data are presented in tables in a lengthy appendix, which is followed by a comprehensive reference list. The book is well indexed.

It is hardly surprising that much of this book does not lend itself to reading straight through (though some readers will find it interesting and valuable to do that) but is more a source of reference, in which context it is unique and invaluable. It should certainly find a place world wide in departments concerned with child health, but I would also highly recommend it to any individual who special-

ises in physiological, epidemiological, or clinical aspects of growth.

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Developmental Examination of Infants and Preschool Children. By Dorothy Egan. (Pp 84; £15 hardback.) Clinics in Developmental Medicine. Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1990. ISBN 0-632-02844-0.

Like hundreds of other young doctors, I was inspired by the teachings of a small, frail paediatrician in her eighties who exuded a tremendous vitality and enthusiasm for child development. Dorothy Egan, who has been an outstanding clinician and teacher at Guy's Hospital for over 30 years, has now summarised her accumulated experience and wisdom in a short monograph. This book is designed as a practical guide for general practitioners and health visitors involved in preschool surveillance rather than a comprehensive textbook of child development. Its strength lies in the description of the art and style of developmental assessment rather than the minutiae of periodic developmental examinations. This descriptive strength is, however, underpinned by population based research. After many years spent refining simple developmental tests in clinical practice, Dr Egan has standardised them on 425 normal children, and presents the normative data in graphical form.

The book opens with a useful overview of normal development summarising normal stages up to 4.5 years. The best parts of the book include sections on: 'when to worry about children', which gives sensible advice illustrated by case histories, and a short chapter on the craft of developmental examination. These are the areas of developmental assessment which are most difficult to learn, and Dr Egan usefully summarises years of experience.

The second half of the book has chapters on clinical tests of hearing and vision, the assessment of language, performance, and gross motor skills. Written in an abbreviated style, almost in note form, they provide guidance rather than a critical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the tests. The best section is the one on language, which includes a detailed description of the Egan bus puzzle test, which is a simple test of language development from 20 months to 4.5 years of age. The results of the standardisation of this and other common tests are clearly presented in a graphical format which identifies children in the lowest 20% as requiring further follow up and investigation.

Whether or not this is the correct threshold for referral is debatable, but the standardisations do provide very helpful illustrations of the range of normality for simple tests which can be used in a primary care or outpatient setting. The final chapter describes the Egan modification of the Sheriden miniature toy test and its standardisation. This time consuming test requires considerable experience to interpret it correctly and is not suited to primary surveillance, making this chapter seem out of place.

The descriptions of the tests are illustrated by photographs, many of which are dated and, although pertinent, do not enhance the contemporary relevance of the text. Although the style varies from lucid prose to an abbreviated