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.

S W D'SOUZA

Consultant paediatrician and senior lecturer

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who are directly involved in the field both clinically and from the research aspect (although likely to become out of date quickly in such a fastly changing field, it will be an invaluable summary of knowledge so far).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.

DIANA GIBB

Lecturer in infectious diseases

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.

J M H BUCKLER

Senior lecturer in paediatrics and consultant paediatrician

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 Sheridan 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

note form, the language remains clear and the book is easy to read.

This book joins many others aimed at primary care professionals involved in child health surveillance. It is quite expensive for its size, and a paperback version might prove more popular. It clearly describes a British system of developmental assessment which has been refined over many years, and is the distillation of enormous experience of young children.

It will be of practical use to GPs and health visitors. Trainee paediatricians not lucky enough to have experienced Dr Egan's clinical teaching would also benefit from reading this book and by acquiring the clinical skills it describes.

A MEMOND
Consultant paediatrician
(community child health)

Textbook of Fetal and Perinatal Pathology. Edited by Jonathan S Wigglesworth and Don B Singer. (Pp 1308; £195 hardback.) Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1991. ISBN 0-86542-118-8.

Ten years ago, one of the frustrations of perinatal pathology was the lack of a good up to date reference book. Besides a few monographs covering specific areas, researching the most mundane topic often required a trawl through the original literature. Fortunately, this dearth of pathology texts has gradually changed and has now culminated in the publication of this two volume reference work.

The editors are two distinguished pathologists, one from each side of the Atlantic, who have drawn together expert contributors working throughout the northern hemisphere. Their aim was to produce a reference book for perinatal and paediatric pathologists, but one which would also be of value to perinatologists, geneticists, and other workers involved with the care of the fetus and newborn infant.

The first volume covers the principles and practical aspects associated with the performance of the perinatal necropsy. Chapters

range from assessment of fetal growth, the performance of the perinatal necropsy or examination of abortuses and stillborn infants, to congenital tumours, disorders of the immune system, infection, and inborn metabolic diseases. While most chapters provide solid practical guidance, and the presence of innumerable tables of normal values are particularly valuable (down to anal diameters and phallus lengths!), the theoretical background, such as a consideration of the causation of malformation, is not ignored.

The second volume covers all the main organ systems, up to and including eye pathology, and an in depth look at the orofacial region. These chapters appear reasonably comprehensive and, in researching recently arisen problems, have provided either a useful comment or reference. More comprehensive specialist texts will not be replaced of course, particularly in the field of dysmorphology, as the descriptions here will often only be of value if a diagnosis has already been made or suspected.

The quality of the line diagrams and reproduction of the macroscopic photographs is, in general, of a high standard and they are useful adjuncts to the text. However, and herein lies the main criticism, the same cannot be said for the photomicrographs, particularly the medium to low powers. Without the eye of faith, it is frequently impossible to discern the feature(s) which are supposed to be illustrated. As it is a problem of more than one chapter this seems to be because of poor reproduction, rather than poor quality of the original photomicrograph. Overreduction of the prints may also have contributed to the problem. One suspects, however, that this may be more of a frustration to the inexperienced than the experienced perinatal pathologist, and to non-pathologists, it may not matter at all.

There is no doubt that all perinatal and paediatric pathologists will want this book on their shelves and will refer to it regularly. Other interested groups will wish to have access to a copy, perhaps in the departmental or hospital library; the information will be

complimentary to that typically present in more clinical works.

S J GOULD
Consultant paediatric pathologist

A Parent's Guide to Cystic Fibrosis. By Burton L Shapiro and Ralph C Heussner Jr. (Pp 124; \$14.95 hardback.) University of Minnesota Press, 1991. ISBN 0-8166-1488-1.

It is likely that the knowledge and competence of parents of children with cystic fibrosis is at least as important a factor in modifying the outlook for the patient as the corresponding knowledge and skills of the clinical consultant. Books explicitly written for parents need to be simple, accurate, up to date, attractive, and informative. The amount of information to include is a matter of judgment, and the authors of this little book have successfully avoided the temptation to show off their medical knowledge by including too much, perhaps because neither is a clinician. Dr Shapiro is a geneticist with a distinguished record of research in the pathogenesis of cystic fibrosis and Mr Heussner is a professional medical writer and editor, and together they write in an attractive style.

The range of chapters includes genetics, pathophysiology, clinical features, psychosocial features ('family life'), and horizons of research. The book also contains a useful glossary of technical terms and a good index. One of the best features is the use of diary entries drawn from a real family's experiences. These have been sensitively and carefully chosen to illustrate important points and manage to be human without being intrusive or embarrassing.

The authors, the families who gave them information, and their medical advisors are all all to be congratulated on a book which not only achieves its main objectives but could also be read profitably by anyone interested in cystic fibrosis.

JOHN A DODGE
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