index enabling the general paediatrician to identify quickly most paediatric dermatological problems. This sets the scene for what proves to be quite a thorough book covering, in 20 chapters, dermatological aspects of paediatric practice, ranging from evaluation of the paediatric patient through to dermatopharmacology. In between there are concise, informative chapters on groups of disorders/clinical problems presented in an easily digestible but nevertheless comprehensive fashion.

The chapters on papulosquamous disorders and bullous diseases and mucocutaneous syndromes are particularly well written with excellent colour photographs of the various conditions throughout. Each of these chapters is subsectioned in a logical manner with brief outlines of the pathogenesis of the diseases, adding significantly both to the quality of the text as well as the reader's understanding of individual conditions. Also included in each chapter is a reasonable bibliography. On a personal note I would have liked to have seen more emphasis on the embryological development of the skin in the opening chapter. Furthermore, there are inevitable occasions when the requirement for more detail is not met.

In general, however, this book meets all its intended aims, including the specific needs of most clinicians involved in the primary care of children. It would make good reading for paediatricians in training as well as forming a useful part of the premembership reading schedule. The majority of paediatricians, I am sure, would be happy to have this book on their shelves and it would also be useful as a quick reference guide for those with particular interests in paediatric dermatology.

Most paediatric dermatology texts fail to inspire, however the authors in this case have managed to write a most enjoyable book!

PAUL BUSS
Research fellow in medical genetics

Genetic Disorders of the Skin. Edited by Joseph C Alper. (Pp 378; £97 hardback.) Wolfe Publishing, 1991. ISBN 0-8151-0111-2.

This is a good multiauthor book on genetic disorders of the skin that sets out to describe many common and rare conditions which have a genetic basis. The conditions are grouped under useful headings such as hypopigmentation disorders, nail disorders, genetic hair disorders, and biochemical diseases. The presentation, natural history, inheritance, pathological findings, and treatment are given for most disorders described. There is also an attempt to include rare one off case reports, which is helpful to more specialised readers. There are useful tables and figures and it is well referenced. For a reference book it is relatively short and there are omissions. However, the conditions it does describe are covered fully. Some disorders feature in more than one chapter, which is probably necessary for completeness, but there are some discrepancies between the texts reflecting the different authors which is irritating. Dermatologists often use specialised terms to describe syndromes and clinical findings and a glossary would have been useful.

This book seems to be geared to the non-geneticist (which is a shame as geneticists badly need a good reference book on skin disorders). There are three chapters on general genetic principles describing chromosomes and cell division and a very good chapter on genetic counselling. As an introduction to gen-

etics they are very useful chapters, but my worry is that most busy clinicians do not read books from cover to cover but look up a specific disorder. It would have been more helpful to have had a genetic section written by a geneticist for every disease, rather than separate chapters. For example, X linked ichthyosis is described in good detail in the chapter on keratinising disorders but the genetic aspects are covered more fully in the chapter on genetic counselling which is not referenced in the index. In the main dermatological text the gene for X linked ichthyosis is described as being on the short arm of the X chromosome, whereas in the genetic text, it is revealed that the gene has been cloned, as indeed it has!

In addition, clinicians addressing the genetic issue of any disease need to know not only that a condition can be inherited as an autosomal recessive or dominant or X linked recessive, but need an appraisal of which is the most likely mode of inheritance and they want sibling and offspring recurrence risks. This area is not well covered. Many authors are out of date with their description of carrier and prenatal testing and some qualifying statement is needed to urge readers to check on the latest developments.

I think, however, this book covers a wide range of genetic conditions with dermatological features and would be a useful addition to any medical library.

KAREN TEMPLE
Consultant in clinical genetics

Tuberculosis in Children. Edited by Professor Vimlesh Seth. Publication of *Indian Pediatrics*. Official journal of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics, 1991. (Obtainable from: Cambridge Press, Kashmere Gate, Delhi 110006, India.)

Until computerised Medline facilities became readily accessible in our libraries the Indian journals of medicine and paediatrics were largely ignored by western physicians. Even now few British medical libraries stock Indian journals. Consequently a large and fascinating body of literature has remained undiscovered. In many areas of infectious disease the Indian clinical experience is vastly greater than in the west.

Nowhere is this more true than in the field of tuberculosis. In India the annual rate of infection is about 3% and 3.4 million children are estimated to have tuberculosis. Perhaps another 94 million children are at risk of infection. No western books on paediatrics have provided a comprehensive update on the subject of childhood tuberculosis, especially in the context of the developing world.

It is therefore to the credit of *Indian Pediatrics* that they have produced an updated compilation of papers in the form of a book *Tuberculosis in Children* edited by Professor Vimlesh Seth from the Division of Tuberculosis in the Department of Paediatrics at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. Professor Seth herself has written most of the early chapters on epidemiology, diagnosis, immunopathogenesis, and the immunology of BCG vaccination and the tuberculin test. These chapters are readable, comprehensive, and well referenced. There have been many recent advances in mycobacterial immunology and it is to Professor Seth's credit that she has managed to be so concise. The chapters on imaging in childhood tuberculosis by Doctors S Mukhopadhyay and A K Gupta from the Department of Radiodiagnosis, All India Institute of Medical Sciences present a unique

collection of x ray films and computed tomograms which are of reasonable quality and reproduction considering the price of publication.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the book is the chapter on neurotuberculosis by Professor P M Udani, the elder statesman of paediatric tuberculosis in India. He presents a summary of his vast clinical experience in Bombay and highlights the fascinating array of new clinical pictures and syndromes which have emerged over the last decade, largely because of the extensive coverage of children with BCG vaccination and the misuse of powerful antituberculous drugs. Consequently the clinical manifestations of neurotuberculosis have altered.

John Stanford of University College and Middlesex School of Medicine is one of only two non-Indian contributors and elegantly reviews the use of new tuberculin in studying the development of the immune response in children, the assessment of vaccine efficacy, and the value of skin tests in the assessment of immunotherapy.

This is an excellent book and the editorial staff of *Indian Pediatrics* deserve great credit for its rapid publication. If there is one criticism it is the absence of a review of community based strategies to improve the control of tuberculosis. The book is heavily clinically orientated. Experience of community based programmes to improve case detection, follow up, and monitoring of resistance patterns would have been valuable. At 125 rupees (\$15) this is a mandatory buy for any physician contemplating working in a developing country.

ANTHONY COSTELLO
Senior lecturer

Pediatrics—An Approach to Independent Learning. 2nd Ed. Edited by C W Daeschner Jr and C J Richardson. (Pp 548; £22 hardback.) Churchill Livingstone, 1990. ISBN 0-443-08758-X.

Medical students choosing textbooks usually have to decide between a handbook containing brief summaries of common conditions, or a tome with detailed monographs on every rarity. In either case, they may well feel that what they read does not prepare them for their encounter with a patient in hospital or in the community. This book, which was designed as a companion to the clinical paediatric course at the University of Texas at Galveston, offers an original approach to teaching about patients rather than diseases.

The authors' objectives of teaching 'real life' paediatrics is reflected in their arrangement of chapters: forsaking the usual strategy of listing diseases by organ system, they describe a number of common clinical presentations, such as the child with fever, abdominal pain, or enlarged lymph nodes. The main text of each chapter is preceded by a statement of the objectives and a test of prerequisite scientific and clinical knowledge. Much emphasis is placed on assessment of indicators of illness severity. The student will learn how to decide which children may be treated at home, which need further investigation, and which are in 'pre-arrest status'. The text is profusely illustrated with short clinical histories and each chapter is followed by 10 to 20 multiple choice questions, often on patient management problems. One or two sections, such as the chapter on congenital heart disease, revert to a traditional didactic style, but in the main the problem orientated approach is maintained, and there is a consistency of style.