headings indicating the subject matter would have been clearer—that is, epidemiology and environmental influences, preventative medicine, acute illnesses, chronic diseases, and the organisation of the practice.

There is strong emphasis on the social, emotional, and psychological aspects of child health. Chapters are devoted to family matters such as working mothers, day care facilities, life events, and children and television. The average North American preschool child watches 28 hours of television a week! It is suggested that paediatricians should recommend an hour's television a day for their young patients. The adverse effects of poverty, lack of health insurance, and poor housing are referred to repeatedly. There is even mention of a newly described condition called the homeless child syndrome.

As always, there are differences of emphasis in the practice of medicine in the United States compared with the United Kingdom. Nineteen pages are devoted to sexually transmitted diseases but the whole of physical and sexual abuse is covered in only six. I was not impressed to find meningococcal infection deeply buried in a very theoretical section on purpura.

Despite these criticisms this is a readable book with a different slant from most British texts. It should be useful to general paediatricians, general practitioners, and trainees in both fields. I recommend it to the practice or departmental library.

M CUMMINS
Consultant paediatrician

Color Atlas of Child Sexual Abuse. By David L Chadwick, Carol Berkowitz, David Kerns, *et al.* (Pp 163; \$25.50 paperback) Year Book Medical Publishers, 1991. ISBN 0-8151-1605-5.

The back cover of this slim paperback sets out the authors' aims: to provide diagnostic assistance, to prevent missed diagnoses of abuse, and to avoid over reporting of abuse. It claims to be a practical guide for use in office, clinic, and emergency room settings by health care professionals. Does it succeed?

The bulk of the book contains over 100 colour plates of children's genitalia and anuses supported by details of each child's age and sex, examination method, and a brief clinical history. The introduction illustrates examination techniques and the three sections then show normal findings, findings that 'commonly result from non-sexual or indeterminate etiology' and findings resulting from sexual abuse. This last section includes some dozen plates illustrating the clinical manifestations of selected sexually transmitted diseases.

Despite the comprehensive nature of the illustrations, one is left with feelings of incompleteness and unease about the use of this book by generalist 'health care professionals' to whom it is directed. Clearly detailed discussion of multidisciplinary assessment and management are outside the book's scope. However, important omissions are a diagrammatic key to the anatomical terms used in describing various physical signs and illustrations of any penile injuries. The plates showing lichen sclerosis atrophicus are also disappointing. On the positive side, the sequential illustrations showing healing are helpful, as are those showing normal variations in hymenal configuration.

This is not a book from which the inexperienced doctor should seek reassurance about his or her 'diagnosis' when presented with a child with an anal or genital complaint, as it cannot replace discussion and advice from a more experienced clinician. Those who are regularly asked to examine children who may have been abused will find it a useful reference text.

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Disorders of Carbohydrate Metabolism in Infancy. Edited by Marvin Cornblath and Robert Schwartz. (Pp 416; £49.50 hardback.) Blackwell Scientific Publishers, 1991. ISBN 0-86542-137-4.

Clinical practice is a delicate balance between dynamic pragmatism and scientific certainty. As far as glucose homeostasis is concerned, there has been a slow but sure shift towards the

latter, attributable in considerable measure to the efforts of the editors of this book. The new, extensively revised edition is one of those rare books that is a must for every paediatrician because it contains a wealth of practical advice based on sound pathophysiology. It is written in concise, clinically oriented sections which deal with the whole spectrum of metabolic upsets where they are relevant to glucose homeostasis.

It lays out clearly that which is certain and illustrates our complete ignorance of areas pertinent to everyday practice (dynamic pragmatism to the fore). The most telling of these is that there is still no agreement on the exact definition of hypoglycaemia after 30 years of research! The authors comment that a properly controlled prospective trial of plasma glucose concentration *v* neurodevelopmental outcome in newborn infants has never been done to define a 'safe' value. At a practical level, there is an excellent discussion on the problems of the poor precision of reagent strips for the diagnosis of hypoglycaemia. New sections have been included on the common problem of hyperglycaemia in the extremely low birthweight infant (or in their terminology 'the micropreemie') and transient neonatal diabetes mellitus is given a chapter of its own.

The book is divided into two broad areas, the first half is an update on hypoglycaemia (very useful for the research fellow starting on a project) with a particularly helpful section on the management of the infant with persistent severe hypoglycaemia. The second half contains separate chapters devoted to the special problems relating to glycogen storage diseases (we will have to revise what we teach the medical students: glucose-6-phosphatase is not that simple anymore), galactosaemia/fructosaemia (ranging from the molecular genetics to the clinical prognosis), and metabolic diseases which masquerade as hypoglycaemia (rare, but always a severe clinical problem). At the end of the book there is an excellent section on the substances which are known to interfere with the reliability of glucose estimations in the laboratory (frighteningly large). The references alone are worth the price!

ANIL MEHTA
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