of the words. In fact, the lack of sophisticated and precise measures of social factors means that residual confounding is almost inevitably a problem and that interpretation of apparent causal relationships requires caution.

Smoking unquestionably has serious effects on health but the consistency of social class gradients in health across populations and over time, in spite of very different patterns of smoking, makes it difficult to accept that smoking now accounts for all or most such differences. The need to reduce smoking must not obscure the need to confront all the health effects of deprivation. Similarly, while randomised trials of smoking intervention programmes in pregnancy, such as those reported here, are welcome, the social context in which women 'decide' to smoke cannot be ignored. The lack of discussion of this social context mars an otherwise interesting and important book.

STUART LOGAN
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Sickle Cell Disease. By Graham R Serjeant. 2nd Ed. (Pp 631; £27.50 paperback.) Oxford University Press, 1992. ISBN 0-19-262231-5.

Professor Graham Serjeant's book *Sickle Cell Disease* has, since its first publication in 1985, come to be known as the 'Bible of sickle cell disease'. This second edition will perpetuate the book's position and role as the basic library reference book for the field. The new edition has been expanded with an extra 100 pages of text and over 600 up to date references. It covers the basic concepts, including haemoglobin structure and synthesis, laboratory diagnosis, its pathophysiology, the epidemiology, pathology, and clinical manifestations, the interactions of the sickle gene with other haemoglobin variants and thalassaemia genes, the natural history and causes of death, and a short section on screening and counselling for sickle cell disease. There are some 30 pages devoted to the management of sickle cell disease. Thankfully, the author has not succumbed to the idea that the title of the book should be changed to sickle cell disorder from sickle cell disease.

There is no doubt that this is an excellent book that should be available to all physicians caring for patients with sickle cell disease. It will continue to be the first book doctors turn to for descriptions of clinical syndromes in sickle cell disease and to find references for junior doctors preparing case presentations.

The clinical management proposals are strong when they are based on published data and Serjeant argues, frequently and cogently, for proper research trials of the many therapeutic protocols, for example blood transfusion, where only anecdote and clinical experience are presently available. A paediatrician reading through the book would learn much about the late and adult complications of the disease but would have to read most of it to glean the information needed for the day to day management of the paediatric population with sickle cell disease. This is a text aimed at an international readership and the treatment suggestions, outside those proved by clinical trial, are not optimal within the British National Health Service and as a result, I suspect, for much of Europe and North America. No one textbook can be all things to all doctors and the strength of this book is in the descriptions of epidemiology, natural history, and pathology.

SALLY C DAVIES
Consultant haematologist

Colour Guide - Paediatrics. By Roslyn Thomas and David Harvey. (Pp 160; £7.95 paperback.) Churchill Livingstone, 1992. ISBN 0-443-04633-6.

Although there is really no substitute for seeing patients and acquiring clinical skills at the bedside, picture guides may help to fill gaps and aid the recognition of childhood disorders.

This short book includes photographs and a brief text covering a variety of common (and less common) childhood disorders. Additionally there are sections on developmental milestones, nutrition and growth, assessment, and children in hospital.

A book such as this is inevitably only as good as the quality of the photographs. I started by flicking through the pages to see whether I could make a 'spot' diagnosis without looking at the text. Apart from a handful of photographs, the colour prints are of a high standard and the diagnosis was obvious.

The text is brief but generally pertinent and complements the photographs. Most of the cases would be appropriate for undergraduates or the DCH. Candidates for the Part 2 of the MRCP might also benefit from looking through this book as part of their revision. Some very rare disorders such as progeria and Menkes' syndrome are included, which seem out of place in this book.

It is difficult to know who will buy this book; it is certainly not an alternative to a standard textbook of paediatrics at undergraduate or postgraduate level. However it would be a useful book to have in a medical or nursing library or on the children's ward.

A W BOON
Consultant paediatrician

Twins and Higher Multiple Births: A guide to their nature and nurture. By Elizabeth Bryan. (Pp 259; £35.00 hardback.) Edward Arnold, 1992. ISBN 0-340-54452-X.

'Ah ha' thought I, 'a guide to twins and supertwins, light bedtime reading'. 'Oh no', I soon discovered this book is much more than a guide; with over 35 pages of references this is a reference book. 'Nature and nurture' does however reflect the author's dual approach to the subject, for she covers the book at two levels, the science behind twins and twinning (nature) and her sensible approach (nurture) to twins within the family and society.

The early chapters on the biology of twinning provide an excellent background for understanding the prevalence of and factors determining zygosity. Chapters on pregnancy and twins as fetuses follow with in depth reviews of the problems to which they are prone, including twin to twin transfusion and congenital and acquired anomalies. The explanation, aided by very clear diagrams, of the variations in placentation associated with monozygotic and dizygotic twins clarified a field that I had always found difficult.

The second half takes us from the delivery of twins and the recognised neonatal problems to their first year and then onto school. The chapter on feeding again reflected her personal approach. An ardent supporter of breast feeding she has demonstrated that with continuing support, over 90% of mothers wishing to breast feed their twins were still breast feeding at 6 weeks.

The intrapair relationships of twins is well discussed and provides a useful insight into this field of behaviour as does the section on the effect of the death of a twin on its sibling and the rest of the family. The final chapters deal with supertwins or the higher order births with helpful reviews on the ethical issues of infertility treatment and fetal reduction.

Bryan's personal approach to the subject kept reminding me of the huge stress that twins and supertwins can put on a family and how often this goes unrecognised. My attitude to and knowledge of twins has been greatly improved by this book and the challenge has been thrown down to improve our service to twins and their families.

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