Foley catheter technique is suggested for foreign bodies trapped in the oesophagus, whereas in Britain this would not be recommended and preference would be given to oesophagoscopy under anaesthesia. I enjoyed the superb line drawings, which are clear, uncluttered, and instructive.

A few comments on various chapters cover monitoring, vascular access, nutrition, ventilatory and respiratory support needs. The importance of critical care nurses is emphasized. A chapter entitled The Aftermath of Childhood Injuries covers the problems of disability, psychological consequences, and organ procurement. A section on speculations and hopes for the future of trauma care makes interesting reading. Twenty four surgeons were asked their views on the two most important reasons for recent improvement and two hopes for the future. Answers were varied, but included improved training, life support courses, management protocols, and paediatric trauma centres as reasons for recent improvement. The future for some contributors looks bright (there will be new mediator antagonists to aid recovery, synthetic oxygen carrying blood substitutes, better prehospital care). Others are more pessimistic and wonder if trauma care will become less specialised, devolving to smaller units with less expertise.

To sum up: I - I like this book; big, heavy, glossy paged, and well referenced. The sort of book it is a pleasure to read, easy on the eye, and seductive to touch. The contents do justice to the presentation. The sort of book you don't buy (too expensive), but persuade your library to buy, borrow frequently, and return reluctantly.

ELIZABETH MOLYNEUX
Consultant in paediatric accident and emergency medicine


I suspect all of us have sometime craved for a book that helps us to sort out our diagnostic problems: one that points us in the direction of a few apposite tests, which will guide us to the hitherto elusive diagnosis. (I personally think that when one is in a tight corner with a sick child, the wisest course of action is to consult a colleague whose judgment one has learned to trust, but he may have been sent on a management course or be out of the country!) Douglas Addy's book aims to be such a guide. With a page size of 9.5" by 7.5", and weighing 1 lb 6 oz (625 g), it hardly slips into the pocket, although at just £27.50 it doesn't make too big a hole in it. Its 20 chapters are all by well known experts from the UK with a slight, but very understandable, predominance of the home team from Birmingham. All the major paediatric subspecialties are covered, including those in which general paediatricians may be insecure, such as ophthalmology, ear, nose, and throat, clinical chemistry, and genetics.

The editor and contributors have striven to keep in mind that the book is about investigations, whatever that means. Dame June Lloyd, in her foreword, emphasises that the most important investigations are a careful history and a skilled physical examination. There is a risk of giving lists of possibilities, or tests, for any clinical situations, but sometimes even longer lists, if systematically presented, can be very useful as aide-memoires. Puntis and Booth manage this particularly well in their chapter on gastroenterology, even making lists of 44 causes of protracted diarrhoea and 32 causes of recurrent abdominal pain seem digestible.

Some authors convey their enthusiasm for their subjects better than others: the chapters by Wrathall (metabolic disease), Tarlow (infective (child abuse), Kelly (bleeding (child abuse), all have a vigour that makes for easy reading, and Rigby's section on cardiology is a model of conciseness.

Much of the neonatal chapter (Stewart and Turner) contains information that can be found in the many excellent small, pocketable, handbooks, but it is right that for the sake of completeness that it be included.

Sartori and Mont's contribution on oncology is good too, although the recommendation that the urine of children with opsoclonus should be examined for catecholamines will, I fear, bewilder more than it enlightens, in this age when few schoolboys learn Latin, and still fewer study Greek. My Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary fails to mention it, and even the current Nelson Textbook omits the term 'opsoclonus'. Has, like drinking plain water, the term 'dancing eyes', gone out of fashion?

But this is a book review, not a retirement speech. I can't mention everybody, but all the contributors pass muster. A bold statement, but I hope this book will be well received, and I return reluctantly.

R A F BELL
Consultant paediatrician


All medical students have had at least 'A' level chemistry before they start preclinical training and they learn biochemistry for at least a year, yet within a year or so of the second professional examination, many appear to have lost not all but the vaguest traces of this fundamental subject.

When I entered paediatrics a quarter of a century ago, what struck me most was its eclecticism; there was hardly any subject that I had touched upon in medical school that was not occasionally relevant. Biochemistry was clearly much more than that; whether in the acute management of a vomiting baby, a virilised toddler or an unconscious 10 year old, a knowledge of basic biochemical pathway was then, and remains, a sine qua non to good clinical practice.

The title of this large book edited by Dame Barbara Clayton and Dr Joan Round boldly proclaims its ambitions, and has a distinguished team of contributors to achieve those aims; which are partly to guide the clinician through those biochemical pathways relevant to paediatric practice, to explain the strengths and weaknesses of biochemical tests, and to give the biochemist the paediatrician's point of view. This is a second edition, 10 years after the first, and it contains many new chapters, reflecting growth particularly in fields where, for example, who did his 2nd MB more than a decade ago might know almost nothing about, but now most of us is most need of guidance, including peroxisomal, mitochondrial, and lysosomal disorders.

This book is firmly based on clinical practice, starting with instructions on how best to get blood out of babies. A chapter on the new genetics comes next and then the chapters follow the usual pattern of paediatric specialties, beginning with neonatology and the overlap with pediatrics, in particular duplication, for example the section on neonatal hypocalcaemia overlaps that on the chapter devoted to bone mineral metabolism, but that is no disadvantage, as it makes the book more useful as the work of reference is: this is not a book for bedtime reading.

All the chapters are good, and given the star studded list of contributors, authoritative. It is almost invidious to select chapters for special praise, but the neonatal sections from Glasgow (Wharton, Scott, and Turner) and Paris (Poggi, Billette de Villerme, Munnich, and Jonouchy) are outstanding. I have come across no clearer description of the management of neonatal hypocalcaemia anywhere and Alex Mowat's chapter on liver disease positively excites his enthusiasm for his subject.

The section on malignant disease from Alan Craft (Newcastle) and Jon Pritchard (Great Ormond Street) is not only readable but so brimming with good clinical sense that all doctors treating children with malignant diseases should read it. Incidentally this chapter is almost the only one that ventures to use molecular formulas in the description of metabolic pathways and this is quite sufficient to make the reader adequately literate to be able to cope with the odd steroid molecule: the description of the types of congenital adrenal hyperplasia would have been made both clearer and more interesting by their use.

Charles Brook contributes a characteristically robust chapter on growth problems, although many may be surprised by his statement that the diagnosis of hypopituitarism is ‘...in terms of chemical pathology, this is best done by measuring the gonadotrophin concentrations’ (my italics). That may be technically true, but a mention of chromosomal studies is in order, as is an introduction to clinical biochemistry. On the same page we are told, 'The measurement of prolactin is an important guide to pituitary pathology'. So it is, but this reader sought in vain for the normal values for this hormone anywhere in the book.

J W Honour's chapter on endocrinology seemed to me to suffer from the lack of a clinical context: blood tests are measured by 'Dextrostix', not 'Clinisticks' (sic), and while adrenal destruction may follow infection with 'influenza, pneumococcal or haemolytic streptococcal infection', surely the meningococcus deserves a mention. While we are told, 'No child with any allergic condition should be (ACTH) tested', the next paragraph instructs us to do just that. A test on children for celiac disease is a rather worrying omission in the section on measuring blood renin and aldosterone concentrations, where we are advised that, 'The patient should have a normal dietary intake of sodium and have been given potassium supplements'. Somebody forgot the word 'not' here; perhaps it isn't as grave an omission as that of the printers of the notorious edition of the Bible who omitted the same word in the
seventh commandment; but it should have been picked up on proof reading.

These are minor quibbles. This is a valuable book; it is not bad; but from it every senior paediatrician will pick up much he didn't previously know, and younger doctors will not only learn a lot, but also be able to use their hospital laboratory much more efficiently.

R A F BELL
Consultant paediatrician


The first half of this clinically orientated manual, written by five paediatricians from the Schneider Children's Hospital New York, is dedicated to children's haematological problems, and the second half covers all common oncological diseases. Unfortunately the liberal use of tables within the text makes reading in the book difficult as text and tables (many of which last for two or three pages) frequently merge together. A useful feature at the end of each chapter is a section titled 'suggested readings' with relevant (and American) references. The chapter on the haematological manifestations of systemic diseases is clear and informative (and would be particularly useful for MRCP part II), although a list of 21 occasions when foam cells are seen in the bone marrow is excessive. Differences of platelets are comprehensively covered in 53 pages which include many long tables. The longstanding debate over the frequency of thrombocytopenia purpura with steroids or not is well known to all paediatricians. However, in this chapter there is no debate about steroid treatment, just a straight dictat to start it when the platelet count is less than 30 000/mm³.

The second half of the book contains chapters on paediatric malignancies (there are 1400 new cases per year in the UK) with sections on the incidence and epidemiology, aetiology, pathology, clinical features, diagnosis, and treatment for each tumour group. The book's one disease is particularly readable and includes a very clear section on the possible complications arising from treatment. There is a discussion of the difficulties of staging Hodgkin's disease now that lymphangiography and surgical staging are rarely performed. Computed tomography is recommended despite the fact that it reveals splenic disease with only 19% sensitivity, but there is no mention of the use and sensitivity of magnetic resonance imaging. All the chapters on tumours contain details of specific American treatment protocols. For the majority of UK readers these will be of limited use as the majority of children in this country are treated according to MRC, United Kingdom Children's Cancer Study Group, or European protocols. In the final chapter on supportive care, the book covers oncological emergencies, clear guidelines are given on tumour lysis syndrome, hypercalcaemia, superior vena cava compression and spinal cord compression. Febrile neutropenia is discussed together with specific tumour related problems. Interestingly, recommendations for prophylaxis against Pneumocystis carinii pneumonitis with co-trimoxazole include a wider group of patients than in the UK, for example brain tumour patients receiving craniospinal irradiation and patients with stage 3 or 4 rhabdomyosarcoma or neuroblastoma. Only three pages out of the complete manual are allocated to clinical use of stem cell factors.

Undoubtedly this manual contains a lot of useful clinical information (unfortunately some of the oncology is already out of date) which could be of value to all members of the general paediatric team, whether looking after general paediatric patients, children with blood disorders, or with malignancies. It covers comprehensively both haematological and oncological disorders which few other books of this length do. However, it is confusing to use because of the lack of clarity caused by the many long tables within the text and I fear many of this book's potential readers in the UK would be put off by the inclusion of so many detailed American chemotherapy protocols.

KATE WHEELER
Consultant paediatric oncologist


There are about 1500 cases of malignancy diagnosed before the 15th birthday in the United Kingdom per year. Eighty per cent of these cases are treated by a regional centre affiliated to the United Kingdom Children's Cancer Study Group. Because of the workload involved, and distances which families must travel, many of these centres have developed the concept of shared care. This development has led to the need for careful supportive care in outlying hospitals which either have either no protocols or relied on the regional centre for guidance. A similar situation has developed in the United States where the USCCSG, realising that variations in supportive care might bias the outcome of clinical trials, has delegated the authors of this book to produce a definitive guide for all the cooperating hospitals.

The list of chapters is comprehensive, starting with pain management, finishing with psychosocial care, and encompassing every imaginable aspect of supportive care along the way. Far from being the completely logical textbook, the idealistic beliefs of the contributors have included some of the reasoning behind their conclusions and have indicated those areas where firm conclusions cannot be reached.

It is difficult to criticise this book when much of it is admirable, given the differences in practise between North America and the United Kingdom. The indication for use of opioid analgesia is slightly confusing, and a table showing dosage adjustment of acetylsalicylic in renal failure ought to have 'acetylsalicylic' in its legend. There is no mention of liposomal amphotericin or single daily dose antibiotic regimens, and only passing reference to fluconazole. The indications for irradiating blood products should have been delineated more clearly. The section on controlling pain during procedures places general anaesthesia after various suggestions which include the combinations of diazepam or midazolam with morphine or fentanyl. I - and I suspect most of my British colleagues would perform a brief spinal anaesthetic as both safer and more effective. Otherwise the chapter on pain is very good and includes a section on nursing responsibilities during postoperative care or continuous infusion of opiates.

Drug extravasation is a not infrequent problem, but while the authors state that there is no consensus on how to deal with it, there are no mention of the subcutaneous flushing procedure and indeed perpetuate the notions of various antidotes, cold or warm compresses, and hyaluronidase.

One criticism is which in the overall context of the book are minor - I think every senior house officer or registrar who has more than passing involvement with paediatric cancer patients could make use of a copy of this book. I would leave the wheal on the ward where, no doubt, it will need frequent replacement.

CHRISTOPHER MITCHELL
Consultant paediatric oncologist


Pediatric intensive care is still in the early phases of development in the UK. As a specialty it is fully established in Canada, Australia, and the USA; many UK paediatric intensivists have spent time training in centres there so the book will have a large influence on the management of critically ill children in this country. This collection of dissertations from paediatric intensive care units in the USA provides an up to date overview; some are relevant to British practice, others largely to American medicine.

Topics include pain relief and adequate sedation, emergency access to the body's circulation, novel treatments in acute respiratory failure (which include liquid ventilation, bringing to mind the necessity of future intensivists having to obtain a ticket of proficiency in scuba diving!), infections caused by viruses and by nosocomial means.

Overall the approach is practical where it refers to management in the intensive care setting; for example, the recommendation of sedation in the treatment of convulsive status asthmaticus is clearly only applicable in the intensive care environment and nowhere else! Guidelines for treatment of asthma and convulsions are hazy compared with the much clearer approach in the section on the injured child. This approach is didactic and is the most workable in a trauma case, with resuscitation being directed in order of priority to airway, breathing, circulation, disability, and exposure with appropriate interventions followed by secondary detailed examination of each part of the body.

On a few occasions the suggested practical tips are odd, for example the evacuation of subdural haematomas in infants with a 22 gauge spinal needle at the bedside is somewhat heroic.

Child abuse is dealt with briefly and in the context of intensive care. Sensibly the authors emphasise the importance of a thorough history and examination and aptly caution the medical practitioner not to be accusatory - it is not often clear at first who is the perpetrator. The authors correctly place importance on photographing lesions and these pictures should be signed along with the time and date. Where taken, I would suggest that photographs should be taken of the whole child so as to refute or confirm the presence or absence of injuries at a later date.

The value of necropsies, significant ethical issues, and outcome evaluations of intensive