deal with diabetes and metformin. One paper is on the mechanism of insulin action, another on insulin sensitive glucose uptake and a third on lipid metabolism. Of the three communications dealing with metformin, one discusses its anti-hyperglycaemic action, another its effect on non-diabetic lipid metabolism and a third compares the risks involved with those of using a sulphonylurea. So that, although the communications contain useful information, as a review of diabetes and metformin this symposium carried us very little further.

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Endocrine Tumours: the Pathobiology of Regulatory Peptide-Producing Tumours, Julia M. Polak and Stephen R. Bloom. *Current Problems in Tumour Pathology: The Pathobiology of Malignant Disease*. Vol. 1. Pp. vii + 288, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £35.00.

This volume makes an exciting start to an attractive new series edited by Professors Nicolas Wright and John Azzopardi, to be followed by others on Gastric Carcinomas (Filipe & Jass), Lung Carcinomas (McDowell), and Malignant Lymphomas (Lauder & Habeshaw). 'Pathobiology' has a contemporary ring and presumably encompasses both abnormal and normal structure and function in all species.

There are 31 contributors to the 15 chapters, 10 of which are devoted to elegant accounts of today's knowledge and understanding of general aspects of the subject – such as genetic engineering in endocrinology (Hillyard), biosynthesis of neuroendocrine peptides in normal and tumour cells (Steiner *et al.*), clonality and endocrine peptide (APUD) tumours (Pearse), *in vitro* models for studying the pathobiology of endocrine tumours, and clinical utility of neuron-specific enolase as a neuroendocrine tumour marker (Marangos). The other five chapters are more concerned with specific tumours in the gut and pancreas (Sabate *et al.*), the lung (Sheppard *et al.*), the thyroid (Williams), the pituitary (Van Noorden *et al.*), and in the endocrine syndromes (Ch'ng *et al.*).

There is a vast amount of readable and well-referenced information here, much of it obtained or inspired by Julia Polak and Stephen Bloom, of scientific and clinical, as well as educational and examination, value, so that it may be thought churlish to observe that the book does not, in addition, highlight and expose the gaps in today's knowledge and understanding. Like so many biomedical texts it gives the student the impression that all is now known, thus frustrating the hope raised by the series title 'Current Problems'. Nevertheless, it is a *sine qua non* for pathobiology departments, as I am sure those that follow it will also be.

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Essential Management of Obstetric Emergencies, Thomas F. Baskett. Pp. xi + 221, illustrated. John Wiley, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto, Singapore, 1985. £17.50.

The author of this excellent book spent ten years as a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology in a remote area of the Canadian north. The personal experience he gained there has placed him in an ideal position to write a book about the management of obstetric emergencies.

The author gives the reader his plan for the management of all common obstetric emergencies. Where there are still areas of clinical disagreement amongst obstetricians he points these out so that the reader can look further, as the scope of this book is necessarily limited.

The occasional North American bias becomes obvious, magnesium sulphate for instance being the first line of treatment in eliminating pre-eclampsia. In Britain this treatment is rarely used. However, this need not detract from what is essentially a practical, clear and helpful book.

This book is well written with clear diagrams. It would be an excellent guide for midwives or any obstetrician in training and would find a welcome place on the reference shelf of any labour ward.

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Herpes, AIDS and Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Derek Llewellyn-Jones. Pp. 155, illustrated. Faber and Faber, London, Boston, 1985. £2.95 (paperback), £6.95 (cased).

This is a well produced and profusely illustrated paperback directed at young people, parents . . . and all professionals working in this field of medicine.

The first chapter 'Questions and Answers' is clear and well thought out and is probably a very useful part of the book. The second chapter 'The Problem of Sexually Transmitted Diseases Today' takes the global view and thus attempts to cover the overlapping behavioural, social and epidemiological aspects of the subject. It does reflect the author's pragmatic and enlightened views. However, the venereal diseases are not legally notifiable in the United Kingdom. Compulsory notification has been tried in several countries and was found to be counterproductive. It has only succeeded in sweeping the problem under the carpet, resulting in false estimates of prevalence. Factual statistics are essential if you are going to plan realistically for adequate medical and educational facilities.

The book could appropriately have included useful information about the well organized network of clinics in the United Kingdom which are open in convenient locations to patients all over the country and which provide free and confidential examination and treatment. Attached to these clinics are trained health advisers who are experienced in gaining the confidence and the voluntary co-operation of the patients in tracing the contacts. This non-coercive system is very successful and many countries are sending their personnel to be trained along similar lines.