become primary physicians and who will need to understand the decisions of urologists to whom they refer patients. However the book has many merits and its approach serves its intended audience well. Despite this it is difficult to recommend it to British students who will be confused by the differences between the American practices described in it and those they will see and be taught in their medical schools. This is a pity because the student will learn a lot from reading this book which could provide a model for anyone considering a similar volume for British students.

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Frontiers in Histamine Research: a Tribute to Heinz Schild. Based on an International Symposium held at Jouy-en-Josas (near Paris), France, 25–27 July 1984. Edited by C. Robin Ganellin and Jean-Charles Schwartz. *Advances in the Biosciences*. Vol. 51. Pp. xvi + 442, illustrated. Pergamon Press, Oxford, New York, Toronto, Sydney, Paris, Frankfurt, 1985. £50.00, \$80.00.

This book is a compilation of some of the papers presented at an International Symposium in France in 1984. In the preface, there is a brief account of the work of Professor Heinz Schild written by Sir James Black. The remaining 45 papers are grouped into 8 sections. These include papers on the receptor biochemistry and pharmacology of histamine and its distribution, release, metabolism and action in the brain. There then follow sections on the actions of histamine in the gut, cardiovascular system and immune responses. The last section is devoted to an account of the mechanisms of histamine release.

Most of the contents of this volume refer to animal work, but provide a good account of the pharmacology underlying clinical research and use of histamine blocking drugs. Clinicians will be intrigued by the paper by Bauman and others on the use of combined H_2 receptor stimulation and phosphodiesterase inhibition as a new therapeutic approach for patients with congestive heart failure. The cost of the volume is representative of that of symposium proceedings and this may limit its purchase to libraries where it will be a very useful addition.

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Genetic Biochemical Disorders. Philip F. Benson and Anthony H. Fensom. *Oxford Monographs on Medical Genetics*. No. 12. Pp. xx + 692, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Toronto, 1985. £55.00.

This is a book remarkable in some ways (its extensive referencing for example) and infuriating in others. The text covers the traditional areas included in the field of inborn

errors, predominantly the defects of intermediary metabolism. It is a daunting task for any two authors to set themselves. Their bigger rival texts are multi-author – Bondy and Rosenberg or the classic text of Stanbury and his colleagues for example. In the sense that this book provides something smaller and cheaper it meets a need but it is not entirely successful. It succeeds particularly in that it contains a large amount of information and a staggering reference list (more than 3,500 on the reviewer's calculations).

In a text of this kind there is the problem of balance and inevitably no two authors can be uniformly knowledgeable over the range of material this book covers. So for example more than a quarter of the text is given over to lysosomal storage disorders and an equal space to amino acid and organic acid disorders. About one-third of the text remains for disorders of purines and pyrimidines, carbohydrates, porphyrins, red cells, lipids and lipoproteins, steroids, copper metabolism and a miscellany of other disorders. It is quite evident where the authors' real experience lies and this is supported by the many clinical illustrations in the section on mucopolysaccharidoses and other storage disorders. There are no clinical illustrations in other sections of the book except for a child with xeroderma pigmentosum. There are other oddities of selection. Copper diseases are covered for example but another trace metal, zinc and acrodermatitis enteropathica is excluded. The miscellaneous selection includes relatively brief accounts of intestinal enzyme deficiencies and genetic forms of rickets. Because of their brevity they do not add to the book. Frequently clinical management is ignored – how to deal with acute attacks of porphyria for example.

In fairness the authors indicate in the Preface that therapy was not their chief objective in producing the book. The reviewer is left with the strong impression that the authors would have produced a better book if they had concentrated on the metabolic fields they know well and given more thought to balance, illustration, presentation (which is rather dull) and therapy. They must however be credited with a text bringing together a large amount of information which will make it a useful source of reference.

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Growth Disorders in Infants, Children and Adolescents. Marvin L. Rallison. Pp. xi + 476, illustrated. John Wiley, New York, Chichester, Brisbane, Toronto, Singapore, 1986. £35.80.

This book provides, in a concise form, a review of normal growth in children from the fetus through to adolescence and in the second half considers disorders of growth at different stages in the child's development. The first six chapters describe methods for measuring intra- and extrauterine growth. Mechanisms for controlling growth in both these environments are considered, although, presumably due to the space available, this is lamentably brief when the endocrine regulation of growth in childhood is considered.

The second part looks at growth disorders and unfortunately in the short space available has tried to encompass every aspect. This portion of the text is well illustrated with growth charts illustrating various disease states which on face value are extremely valuable. Many of the diagrams could have been redrawn as there is considerable variance in the quality of the diagrams reproduced. This merely detracts from the text.

In compiling a book such as this, there is inevitably a lag period between new discoveries and the amendment of a chapter. There is some inconsistency however, the inclusion of patients dying with Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease as a result of receiving growth hormone therapy which was well detailed on the section on hypopituitarism, contrasts with the chapters on puberty and adolescence which are archaic. There are some incredible statements such as that rectal abdominal examination should be performed in girls to determine uterine and ovarian size when the presenting complaint is of precocious puberty. There is even a suggestion that vaginal smears should be obtained! CT scans, according to the author, are the means of investigating ovarian function. In 1985, let alone 1986, none of these particular steps have any place in the management of a child with precocious puberty. Investigations by pelvic ultrasound renders most of the list of investigations suggested as unnecessary. Sadly, despite many articles confirming the efficacy of gonadotrophin hormone releasing analogues only a small paragraph at the end of this chapter is devoted to this subject.

Apart from these points, the book in a rather dry and unexciting way does succeed in its aims of organising knowledge of growth problems to satisfy the needs of medical students, paediatric house staff and primary care physicians. Anyone interested in advances in this field should look elsewhere.

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Health, Race and Ethnicity. Edited by Thomas Rathwell and David Phillips. Pp. vii + 278, illustrated. Croom Helm, London, Sydney, Dover, New Hampshire, 1986. £17.95.

The health care professions have barely come to grips with the issue of ethnic factors in health and health care. This journal has published two conferences which were largely concerned with ethnic factors in common diseases but there remains all too little on the question of health care provision and inequalities of health. In 1983 the British Geographers Medical Geography Study Group held a conference of 'Health, Race and Ethnicity' and this volume is an expanded version of what was said. At first sight, therefore, we might have a book of some value to health care planners, community physicians and doctors. Sadly, detailed reading reveals little of use and a lot of words.

The eleven chapters can be roughly divided into those which contain no data but many generalizations and those which provide some information. If, as one contributor suggests, the primary health-care team (General Practice) is the most appropriate place to do something about ethnic inequalities in health, then it would be best if facts and figures

could be provided. Unfortunately, even those chapters that do contain data tend to concentrate on single issues or single local minority groups. Two authors have addressed the topic more globally and their contributions are useful. Mark Johnson's well researched chapter on primary health care seems out of place beside Maggie Pearson's diatribe against an apparent conspiracy by devious, racist and uncaring doctors. There are some sensible sections of this conference report and data are provided on mental illness, common chronic diseases, and there are sections about health in the ethnic minorities in Denmark and in black South Africans. Unfortunately, however, most chapters, and even some of the good ones, are peppered with the kind of language which one might hope would decline as a result of exposure in the 'Pseud's corner' in *Private Eye*. One contributor states that 'racial inequalities in health . . . reflects the underlying class structure of capitalism'. Another considers only Utopian the idea that improvement of health care might be achieved by a 'partnership of activists and progressive intellectuals'.

Dr Richard Cooper from Chicago does provide a well argued discussion of race and disease, and concludes that there are no truly racially determined diseases, that practically all conditions are quantitative rather than qualitative (Sir George Pickering would have approved) and that even genetically determined diseases are not racially specific. Even sickle cell disease is seen in non-blacks. Then, strangely, even Dr Cooper cannot resist launching into impassioned accusations of Marxism with references to the massacre of Babi Yar and even the Battle of Wounded Knee. A strange virus seems to have infected the participants at this conference, leading to a plague of over-statement and a plethora of breast-beating, so that all the useful things said are diluted into oblivion.

For clinicians and health care planners in city centres, who have the responsibility to provide efficient and sensitive care to all patients, this extraordinary volume will be of some limited use, but it will offend many, and irritate most. Perhaps it is just as well that the book is so verbose that few will actually read it.

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Hypertension Control in the Community. International Symposium held in Tel Aviv, Israel, during 7-14 November 1982. Edited by J.B. Rosenfeld, D.S. Silverberg and R. Viskoper. Pp. x + 366, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, 1985. £32, US\$56, FF415.

The 81 papers in these Conference Proceedings represent the principal contributions to this international gathering which was convened to address the problems of hypertension control in the community. How should such programmes be organised? What are the problems? What lessons can be learned?

The aim of the organisers of the symposium was laudable and some of the contributions will be helpful to investigators who have a particular interest in community programmes, as many of the major projects are discussed (e.g. Hypertension Detection and Follow-up Program, North Karelia project). In addition there are several useful papers on experiences gained in programmes carried out in different countries.