This volume is an interesting medley of epidemiological studies, health promotion, and health service management. Many important areas of public health are covered including infant mortality, trauma and injury, occupational health and low back pain. The epidemiological reviews of the health effects of low-level exposure to lead, cancer risks of radon and man-made vitreous fibres, Lyme disease and smoking control programmes are very comprehensive with over 100 references – a marvellous starting point for anyone wishing to get rapidly abreast of these subjects. UK readers interested in resource allocation and the costs of health care services will discover several descriptions of the US and Canadian experience, although they may find it difficult to generalize from the lessons learnt and apply them over here. Finally, for the more numerically inclined, there are methodological chapters on health surveillance; competing risks and cohort effects on mortality analysis – an interesting addition for those concerned with modelling disease trends and setting targets for the year 2000. Scattered throughout most of the chapters are tables and graphs giving comparative international data, but these are seldom more up to date than 1987. Overall, a readable book with a valuable selection of recent advances in public health for clinicians and public health doctors alike.

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An Aid to Paediatric Surgery, 2nd Edition, edited by R.A. MacMahon. Pp. 267, 125 illustrations. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Tokyo, Melbourne, New York, 1991. Paperback, £15.95.

Paediatric surgery inevitably but regrettably occupies a small place in the undergraduate curriculum. Regrettable because a significant proportion of children attending the general practitioner's surgery or hospital paediatric department will have a surgical problem either as the presenting complaint or as an incidental finding. The availability of a textbook which is short in length, easy to read and contains opinions which are widely accepted is of particular value to medical students, but also to paediatric and surgical junior staff.

Professor MacMahon and the experienced international team of contributors have covered the whole range of paediatric surgery. Inevitably some of the subjects are covered very briefly but each chapter concludes with suggestions for further reading. Chapters on child abuse, paediatric sports medicine, major trauma and ethics in paediatric surgery are included and serve to indicate the very wide range of subjects covered. Some of the chapters are problem orientated, for example, abdominal pain, gastrointestinal bleeding, tumours, and some have an anatomical basis, for example, body wall defects, the face and oropharynx. This tends to result in information on some subjects being scattered and others being covered under unexpected headings, for example, spina bifida in the chapter on body wall defects.

The index is good but undoubtedly the ideal way to derive maximum benefit from this book is initially to read

it from cover to cover rather than use it purely as a reference manual.

It has been aimed at medical and paramedical students to provide a basic, easy to read, easy to remember textbook. Used as described above it fulfills that aim and copies should be available in medical school and hospital libraries.

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Annual Review of Microbiology, Volume 45, 1991, edited by L. Nicholas Ornston. Pp. xi + 657, not illustrated. Annual Reviews Inc., Palo Alto, California, 1991. Hardback, \$41 USA and Canada, \$46 elsewhere including P&P.

Your reviewer has an impossible assignment. In this daunting volume, the topics range from genetically engineered baculoviruses as agents for pest control to chaperone-assisted assembly and the molecular architecture of adhesive pili. Our branching disciplines are yet again in an exponential phase of growth, and the complexities are bewildering. I bless Ralph Wolfe for his paper on 'My kind of biology'. Here is a thrilling and generous account of teamwork in most difficult territory. Wolfe sought in his work to create an atmosphere in which students could develop. The record is wonderful testimony to his success.

Because of my own respect for J.P. Duguid's work on bacterial fimbriae (a term that has scientific priority and established provenance, sadly not honoured in much transatlantic literature), I turned to Hultgren, Normark and Abraham's stimulating review on the exploitation of modern scientific approaches to the study of adhesive heteropolymers. It is encouraging to see how hitherto impossibly complex biological systems are yielding their secrets to our advancing expertise and technology.

The review by Wang and Wang of viruses of the protozoa gives us a glimpse of developments in a neglected field. There are other good virological papers on the hepadnaviruses and hepatocellular carcinoma, on V-Z virus latency, and on aspects of HIV.

For mycologists, there are papers on nuclear fusion in yeast, mechanisms of natural resistance to human pathogenic fungi, and virulence factors of *Candida*. For the reader with an open mind, there is a mine of information and stimulation. There is much that I did not know about and cannot understand. It is splendid.

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The Esophagus, edited by D.O. Castell. Pp. 800, illustrated. Little Brown & Co. London, Boston, Toronto, 1991. Hardback £105.00.

This book reviews, in over 800 copiously illustrated pages, all aspects of oesophageal disease. References to literature continue up to 1990, but the advance of endoscopic surgery has been so rapid that it receives no mention. The book is well produced and accurately