tions and gives a clear account of them and their indications. The relevance of skin testing for atopy and tuberculosis are useful reviews and junior doctors are frequently confused as to their usefulness.

The major section of the book deals with common problems and sensibly deals with both specific illnesses and presenting problems such as pleural effusion. Treatment sections are precise and up to date but because of difficulties with some aspects of treatment, the final section deals with a few specific treatment problems like oxygen therapy and drug nebulisation.

The question and answer format means the book contains a large quantity of data and is therefore not always that easy to read, but is always informative and well produced with an almost complete absence of illustrations, possibly detracting from the radiological sections where line drawings rather than the expensive and difficult to produce X-rays could have helped the text. Despite this reservation, the authors have produced an excellent book for training hospital doctors in chest disease.

G.M. Cochrane
*Department of Thoracic Medicine,
New Cross Hospital,
Avonley Road,
London SE14 5ER.*

A Manual of Neonatal Intensive Care, Second Edition, N.R.C. Roberton. Pp. xiii + 369, illustrated. Edward, Arnold, London, 1986. £10.95.

Neonatal residents welcomed the first edition of this book, having long been without a pocket-size guide to the management of neonatal emergencies. Most relevant topics were covered, but in the second addition some sections have been extended and there are useful new chapters on surgical problems and the care of the severely asphyxiated infant. Another addition is the appendix on the death of a baby. I am delighted to see this important subject included but sorry that there is no mention of bereavement counselling or parent follow-up.

Intravenous feeding has revolutionized the care of sick babies. Unfortunately this chapter lacks a detailed account of how to insert a percutaneous central line (no diagrams) and there is no guidance on how best to prescribe the various solutions to minimize the risk of error.

In contrast, the chapter on resuscitation is most enjoyable. One can picture the author closing doors and windows on the labour ward and rescuing babies from baths (and ravens' beaks?!). The chapters on care in the first hour and disorders of the respiratory tract are excellent. The clear amount of respiratory physiology helps in the understanding of lung disorders encountered in neonates. Tables of drug dosages and normal biochemical values, essential to the busy neonatal resident, are clearly set out.

Neonatology is a rapidly developing speciality and it is vital to the staff of baby units to have at their finger-tips such up-to-date information as this book provides. I strongly recommend it to all those caring for sick newborn babies.

Heather Mackinnon
*Whittington Hospital,
London N1G 5NF.*

Proceedings of the 15th European Conference on Psychosomatic Research, edited by J. Hubert Lacey and D.A. Sturgeon. Pp. xii + 372, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, 1986. £35.00, US\$62.00, FF450.00

Attitudes to medical practice are changing. The successes of modern medicine and technology are not decried but it is strongly argued that the conventional biomedical model from which they are derived is no longer adequate for the range of scientific challenges and social problems facing medicine today. Outside conventional practice, the recognition of the inadequacy is causing a drift towards alternative/complementary medicine. Inside conventional circles it is encouraging an interest in the biopsychosocial or holistic models which are the practical expressions of a systems approach to illness and disease. In this, the individual is seen as a part of an environmental system, acting and reacting in a continuous exchange of energy and information. Health is lost if the effort of coping and adapting outstrips the ability of the homeostasis, the body's self-regulating system, to keep the internal milieu within physiological limits. The environment is regarded as turbulent these days, changing and evolving at such an unprecedented rate that many of us are unable to escape neuroses, the abuse of substances or illnesses related to disordered psychoneuroendocrine or psychoneuroimmune function. These may include hypertension and cardiovascular disease, infections, cancer, arthritis and syndromes of aberrant and incompetent immune function.

Psychosomatic research has moved into this territory, leaving behind the older concepts of psychogenesis, emotional causation of disease or studies of mind-body relationships that do not weigh the environmental influences. It is closely concerned with relationships between psychosocial factors and physiological function in health and disease; with the advocacy of the biopsychosocial or holistic models of care; and with the integration of the technological or mechanistic approaches to disease and those derived from the behavioural sciences.

The Proceedings contain 95 papers from over 150 contributions describing contemporary research. My fear is that the development of this territory and its practical applications might stay in the hands of, say, behavioural psychologists and liaison psychiatrists without entering into the daily work of conventional doctors, nurses and therapists.

P.G.F. Nixon
*Charing Cross Hospital (Fulham),
Fulham Palace Road,
Hammersmith,
London W6 8RF.*

Recent Advances in Epilepsy. No. 3 edited by Timothy A. Pedley and Brian S. Meldrum. Pp. ix + 315, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £38.00.

In their foreword the authors indicate that this, the third volume in the series, is the result of the interest shown in the previous two, and also relates to the pace of change in epileptology. Like its predecessors it should attract considerable interest. The 21 contributors represent views from the USA, Canada, France, Israel, Switzerland and the UK,

the predominance being North American. They provide in-depth coverage of 14 topics, presented in a rather condensed way, each with extensive bibliography.

The clinician will benefit particularly since several of the chapters have immediate relevance to neurological practice, and to the epilepsy clinic. Schmidt's review of the toxicity of the anti-epileptic drugs should be obligatory reading; updates on phenobarbitone by Pritchard and Mattson, and on ethosuximide by Fromm and Crumrine, allow these drugs to retain a therapeutic place when many prescribers in the UK may disdain them; and the excellent coverage of the benign focal epilepsies and of the progressive myoclonus epilepsies is very useful. Gregory Stores of Oxford, battling at No 14 in the order, reviews non-convulsive status which can have disabling long term effects on children, pointing out that this form of status is too little known, too little recognized and therefore too little treated. The message is also pertinent in the adult world.

It is not all easy reading. The chapter on 'Inter-relationships between Sleep and Epilepsy' by Baldy-Moulinier of Montpellier was found to be heavygoing. The 'Neurocytology and Chemistry of Focal Epilepsy' by Ribak of California required close attention. A paragraph in the ethosuximide review about the uncertain mechanisms of drug action remains baffling and incomprehensible (come back, Sir Ernest Gowers). But these do not detract from this further contribution by the authors towards the wider availability of up-to-date information on epilepsy. Clinical practice will be easier by having this book either in or on the office desk.

I.D. Melville
Department of Neurology,
Southern General Hospital,
Glasgow G51 4TF.

Textbook of Psoriasis, edited by Paul D. Mier and Peter C.M. van de Kerkhof. Pp. v + 292, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £45.00.

Nineteen eighty six was obviously a good year for psoriasis. Following the IVth International Symposium on Psoriasis in Stanford, the proceedings of which will be available soon and the publication of the Roenigk & Maibach book on psoriasis, a further textbook dealing solely with psoriasis, was published. The *Textbook of Psoriasis* edited by Mier and Van Kerkhof is a European multiauthor account of psoriasis from a clinical, scientific and therapeutic view point. The involvement of editors in many of the chapters has ensured a consistency of style and content often difficult to achieve in such multiauthor books. The structure of the book is excellent, with a clear layout, good black and white

photographs and diagrams. There is considerable use of diagrams and tables to clarify a text which is never burdensome. It is, therefore pleasurable to read and the references are comprehensive and up-to-date.

The first section – clinical aspects – contains data on epidemiology and genetics, which includes HLA association and useful analysis for genetic counselling. A very comprehensive review of psoriatic arthropathy covering further immunogenetics, immunology and radiological features in addition to the clinical features provides an outstanding component of the clinical section. The cutaneous manifestations of psoriasis are underrepresented, certainly occupying less space than the section on psoriatic arthropathy. Although the book is perhaps aimed at an informed audience, more comprehensive coverage of clinical syndromes in psoriasis and a wider range of references would be helpful in the overall balance. Psychosocial aspects of psoriasis, often neglected by the busy clinical dermatologist, are acknowledged and accorded a significant place which includes a small survey by the Psoriasis Association which has such an important role to play both in an individual's response to their psoriasis and in the society's response to psoriasis.

The section on cellular and molecular aspects deals with the cell kinetics, electron microscopy and immunology but it is weakened by a bias in favour of the authors' work. In addition, the molecular biology section tends to discuss general data on cell structure and epidermal biochemistry to hide a dearth of data in psoriasis. There are a number of omissions – recent important work on eicosanoids and other mediators of inflammation is barely mentioned.

The third section on therapy is also selective – dithranol, phototherapy, retinoids and methotrexate are given comprehensive, although rather didactic coverage. There is a surprising lack of comment on the use of coal tar which is very widespread in British dermatological practice. Not all dermatologists would agree with the recommendation of steroids as the central therapy in psoriasis, particularly in view of the local and systemic side effects and risk of relapse or of the risk of development of pustular psoriasis on withdrawal of potent topical steroids.

The book remains readable and accessible. It is perhaps rather specialized for the general physician and general practitioner but it is to be hoped that they will be tempted to update their general knowledge of psoriasis. For the dermatologist, its strength is a source of reference and coverage of the associated features of psoriasis such as psoriatic arthropathy.

Irene Leigh
The London Hospital,
Whitechapel,
London E1 1BB.