of the patient and his family at each stage from the onset to the final stages. These are laden with practical counsel, lists and pictures of appliances, and with information about the social and welfare services available, including the resources of the MND Associations. These are likely to be most helpful to the wide variety of therapists and carers invoked in the team concept deemed necessary for the management of the illness. They are of even greater importance to the family. There is no discussion on the present trend to prolong the life of advanced cases with mechanical ventilators at home, a technique used frequently in the USA, but seen by many British neurologists as a means of prolonging the agonising process of dying. The ethical problems of assisted ventilation are considerable, as are those concerned with some of the surgical procedures mentioned, e.g. gastrostomy, oesophagostomy and cricopharyngeal myotomy. The reader will likewise search in vain for any detailed advice about when and when not to use antibiotics and when and when not it is appropriate to treat pulmonary aspiration and other intercurrent infections. These are important omissions from an otherwise admirable and compassionate concept; a second edition should remedy them.

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Multiple Sclerosis – Immunological, Diagnostic and Therapeutic Aspects. Number 3. **Current Problems in Neurology**, edited by F. Clifford Rose and Rosemary Jones. Pp. ix + 260, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, 1987. £26.

This book, edited by F. Clifford Rose and Rosemary Jones, is based on a Symposium on Multiple Sclerosis which was held at Charing Cross Hospital in the autumn of 1986. The volume consists of a large number (33) of short chapters on various aspects of the disease, broadly grouped under immunological, diagnostic and therapeutic sections. As would be expected in a multi-authored volume of this kind the quality of the contributions varies considerably. While some chapters are neither informative nor inspiring, others such as those on experimental optic nerve demyelination induced by Semliki Forest virus, biochemical aspects of brain integrity, magnetic resonance imaging and dietary supplementation in multiple sclerosis, provide useful information. The range of subjects covered is certainly wide and the editors have clearly been keen to include a number of controversial issues such as the role of spirochaetal infection, the utility of hyperbaric oxygen and studies of erythrocyte electrophoretic mobility in the disease. I think it would have been helpful to have more review chapters on these more contentious aspects. Inevitably it was not possible to deal with any of the subjects in real depth but, as indicated in the Preface, this was not the editors' specific intention. The real advantage of this kind of approach is the broad scope which allows the non-specialist reader to gain an overview of the com-

plexity of the subject and in this regard the book is a success. As a 'specialist' in the neuroimmunology field I was certainly stimulated by several of the contributions and the book should also serve as a useful source of references. The volume is generally well produced and reasonably priced. It should provide a useful addition to the burgeoning literature on multiple sclerosis.

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Obstetrics and Gynaecology in General Practice, John Eddy and John D. Owen. *Library of General Practice*. Vol. 12. Pp. xi + 415, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1987. £19.95.

This book is the latest volume in the *Library of General Practice* series. Therefore, it is of particular relevance to all general practitioners and the easily readable, informative style makes it interesting and stimulating.

The layout makes it an excellent text for reference, with the subjects of obstetrics and gynaecology covered separately. Management advice is succinct and the point at which a referral to a consultant unit becomes mandatory is also clear. In addition, there is advice on timely filling in of the correct forms, ranging from ante-natal to requests for therapeutic abortions. Treatment methods are given, complete with proper drug dosages and contraindications. Throughout, the text is illustrated with unambiguous diagrams, photographs, pictures, graphs and tables, all of which are excellent supplements.

It is worth noting that certain information contained in the book needs updating, although these details are of a relatively minor nature.

The book remains uncomplicated and helpful, despite thorough and accurate coverage of all the main areas in obstetrics and gynaecology encountered by the general practitioner in everyday practice. It is obvious that the distinct skills of the two authors, one a consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology, the other a general practitioner, have been successfully combined to produce this book. It is likely to become important reading for all trainees and is recommended to practising general practitioners.

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Perspectives on Mammalian Cell Death, edited by C.S. Potten. Pp. xv + 363, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1987. £40.

This is a comprehensive multi-author review of several aspects of cell death. Each author is a specialist in the field. The topics covered are membrane changes, nuclear-