medicine have there been such rapid changes during the past decade. This is reflected in the number of new textbooks of infectious disease which have been published recently. Although many of these have been admirable they have not always given clear therapeutic recommendations.

Professor Ed Kass and Dr Richard Platt are to be congratulated on the present volume. With the collaboration of just over 100 colleagues, many of them distinguished American Infectious Diseases physicians, they have produced a first class and extremely practical manual on the treatment of infectious disease. I found the chapters on immunodeficiency states and on infection complicating immunosuppression particularly useful. Other admirable sections include those on infections of the urinary tract, toxoplasmosis and the toxic shock syndrome.

The United Kingdom clinician may be confused by the occasional reference to antibiotics not available in this country such as the anti-staphylococcal agents nafcillin and oxacillin. Apart from this the therapeutic recommendations are all extremely practical and in line with current thinking. I strongly recommend this book for all who are involved in the treatment of infection in its widest sense.

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New Drugs

Articles published in the *British Medical Journal*. Pp. 215. British Medical Association, London, 1983. £6.00 (including postage), \$20.75 (including air mail postage).

This collection of 21 articles under the title *New Drugs* has been compiled from the recent series published in the *British Medical Journal*. The invited contributors, two-thirds of whom are based in Dundee, have attempted to break away from the format of the popular *Today's Drugs* and *Today's Treatment* series, also published within the last decade by the B.M.J. Nevertheless the new title cannot conceal the similarities to the former series. The result is a useful collation of articles containing relevant information about drugs most of which are up to 15 years old. Many drugs which are technically 'new' but still in the development stages, or have only recently been marketed are not included.

The emphasis of the contribution is on the cardiovascular system (six articles), endocrine and nervous system (three articles each). The approach to the topics varies somewhat from chapter to chapter and editorial guidelines on chapter structure or length or referencing have not been rigorously applied.

Despite this minor criticism *New Drugs* is recommended as a 'good buy' to replace the earlier series, if the original B.M.J. articles were not torn out at the time of their original publication!

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The Normal Child. Some Problems of the Early Years and their Treatment

By R. S. ILLINGWORTH, 8th edn. Pp. 374, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh and London, 1983. £12.00.

The review of a new edition of such a classic text poses special problems including the avoidance of undue awe, affection or other emotions. Nevertheless, it must address itself to a new generation of readers.

The book is outstanding in its highly readable and comprehensive cover of a borderland of child health often still omitted from, or only touched on, in undergraduate studies, and of immense importance for all who meet children in the home, clinic or hospital.

There are some aspects though, which cloud this bright picture. Revision has not been sufficiently thorough. Who now sees children obsessed with a Hula Hoop or the Twist? Is relegation to an institution rather than fostering the necessary fate of babies with a potential mental handicap (130/131)? Are rickets or Pink Disease the likeliest causes of hypotonia (174) in 1984? Ounces and

Millilitres are mixed in infant feeding, perhaps reflecting current clinical experience.

In a book with biblical, literary and classical quotations, the Latin should at least be correct! [Rerum cognoscere causas—(V)], and there are unnecessary spelling errors [Maimonides—(97)] and elsewhere. These however are minor blemishes; more important is the authoritarian tone linked with some views that would not receive wide support. Do new borns turn their heads to the human voice immediately after birth (133)? Does a baby look to see where his dropped rattle has gone at 20 weeks (162/3) and play peep-bo after 5 months (164)? Is circumcision never warranted when both parents want it done (99)? Should all deep congenital dermal (sacroccygeal) sinuses be excised after the age of 2 years (94)? Is speech therapy useless for a child who is late to speak without other pathology—might not the worried parents have given up training appropriate to a younger age though still required to suit his developmental stage (178)?

The text rightly emphasises the unreliability of using specific ages for measuring achievement, yet when ages are quoted, it would be safer to choose a more widely agreed norm.

I was also doubtful regarding the larding of the text with some curious statements from Freud and Melanie Klein concerning thumb sucking, quoted without comment or discussion, or how these views are currently regarded, and other entertaining though somewhat arbitrarily chosen practises from different cultures (eg. uvulectomy) and historical periods included with too little comment to organize such anthropological wealth or to place it into proper context.

For paediatricians with some years experience, this book is a pleasure; for those with less experience, a more dangerous pleasure; and for those entering paediatrics or child health, a text to be enjoyed, discussed and argued about, but not to be accorded biblical status.

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The Physician's Book of Lists

By D. M. MARGULIES and M. S. THALER. Pp. xiii + 290. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh and London, 1983, £7.95.

'Everyone makes lists' the authors state at the start of the preface to this book, in which they later defend themselves against accusations of over simplification and lack of clinical judgement. None of us should expect education or instillation of clinical acumen from a book of lists: it cannot be the purpose of such a book to provide either. Each list is remarkably complete in itself, but this becomes partly a self-defeating exercise, for useful information is easily swamped by rarities. For instance under 'Causes of coma' both hypo- and hyperparathyroidism are mentioned as common causes and this they most certainly are not. This tendency to all-inclusiveness makes the book read more like a revision text for higher exams than a practical vade mecum. It is difficult to see how an active physician would use some of the lists given. In what situation would one want to look up 'Factors affecting bone metabolism' or 'Common drugs which can cause further damage'? In the several months that I have had this book in my office, I have found it less useful than conventional text books or monographs for day-to-day reference. The complete contents list does not unfortunately make-up for the absence of an index. Occasionally there is inadequate advice, such as in the diagnostic strategy for the clinically euthyroid patient with a thyroid nodule. In this situation where there is no history of irradiation to the neck and the nodule is cold on scan, the patient is always, for some reason an elderly female and always 'followed'. The advice appears to conflict with that given five pages later in 'thyroid carcinoma' which is itself a neat summary of the topic.

There is little trouble from the differences in medical practice between U.S.A. and U.K. because most of us can still manage to convert the occasional mg% to SI units, can identify isoprenalol as isoprenaline and recognise barbiturates ending in -al.