Inevitably there are omissions of information – no mention that an inguinal hernia in a girl necessitates a Buccal smear to exclude testicular feminising syndrome (p. 21) and no cross reference between mesenteric adenitis and recurrent abdominal pain. Why I wonder are dosages given for such conditions such as steroids in Crohn's disease but not the dose of intravenous diazepam.

The aim of this book is to provide a practical handbook for paediatricians which it has done very well. It is also hoped that it might be useful to paediatric surgeons, family practitioners and hospital and community nurses. At £8.95 this book is extremely good value.

D. Morris
1 Bryanston Square,
London W1H 4FE.

Oxford Textbook of Public Health, edited by Walter W. Holland, Roger Detels, George Knox, with the assistance of Ellie Breeze. Vol. 1: History, Determinants, Scope, and Strategies. Pp.xii + 280, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Toronto, 1984. £25.00.

The Oxford Textbook of Public Health has been launched to succeed Hobson's textbook of public health, although the 'international nature' of Hobson's book has here been changed to a predominant Anglo-American emphasis. There are to be four volumes, but only the first has so far been published. There is a short introductory section on the history and current scope of the subject, two long sections, one on the determinants of health and disease and the other on the legislative and economic aspects of public health, and a final short section on global health strategies. The other three volumes will cover public health promotion, investigative methods and their specific application.

The first volume is attractively presented, the text amply supported by tables and figures. The contributors are authorities in their fields. However, the editorial objective to portray mainly principles and strategies has produced a style which is rather too philosophical and explorative for a reference book of this kind. The balance and content of the first volume are surprising; some of the subject material lacks direct relevance to public health practice (the haemoglobinopathies, the transport of chemicals in soil) yet there is only brief discussion of topical health determinants such as asbestos, lead, smoking and poor housing. There is an account of the pathogenesis but little on the epidemiology of infectious diseases. Taken on its own, the first volume is somewhat disappointing; the other three volumes may of course redress the balance.

Malcolm Law
Department of Environmental and Preventive Medicine,
The Medical College of St Bartholomew's Hospital,
London EC1M 6BQ.

Paediatric Neuroendocrinology, edited by Derek Gupta, with Patrizia Borrelli and Andrea Attansio. Pp. x + 246, Croom Helm, London, Sydney. £25.00.

The 16 chapters in this book constitute the major papers from the first International Symposium on Paediatric Neuroendocrinology held in Rome in November 1983. The authors of thirteen of the chapters concentrate on presentation of their own research work whilst the remaining three chapters review areas as diverse as the neuroendocrine control of puberty and neuroendocrinological aspects of diabetes mellitus. The third review chapter by Swanson on sex differences in the brain is the pick of the review chapters as it manages to be instructive as well as entertaining.

In the rest of the book the animal model used for the studies varies, with seven chapters on the rat and six chapters on the human. The standard is variable and the best chapters are provided by the 'heavyweights', Gupta on control of gonadotroin secretion in relation to maturity, Martini on endogenous opioids and puberty, New on the polymorphism of ACTH in hyperaldosteronism and adrenal hyperplasia and Reiter on the pineal and sexual development in the male rat.

Other topics discussed include neuropeptides, emotional behaviour and cardiac responses; thyroid hormones and the developing brain; neurotransmitters and growth hormone secretion; beta-endorphin, ACTH and prolactin secretion through childhood.

Unfortunately the worst chapters in this volume are poor and of little value. Therefore I do not think that this book represents sufficiently good value for the individual purchase it. It is the sort of book that one will wish to dip into for selected topics but not to read in its entirety. It would be a useful buy for a hospital library or an institute with a large endocrine unit.

S.M. Shalet
Withington Hospital,
Manchester M20 8LE.

Recent Advances in Anaesthesia and Analgesia, No. 15, edited by R.S. Atkinson and A.P. Adams. Pp. ix + 231, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £14.00.

'I never read a book before reviewing it: it prejudices a man so' (Sydney Smith 1771–1845).

The recruitment of Professor Adams to *Recent Advances in Anaesthesia and Analgesia* is to be welcomed and it reflects the need for an additional editor to scrutinize the increase in new material that is now considered to be within the sphere of the speciality. There are chapters on intravenous agents including relaxants as well as those on synthetic and spinal analgesia. Inhalation of gastric contents continues to be reviewed as well as a detailed presentation of malignant hyperpyrexia. This chapter is unwittingly preceded by one on thermal injury! Upper airway obstruction in children was a recent question in the FFA examination and one suspects that this book will become the gospel for the examination candidate as it was in Langton Hewer's time.

The chapter on calcium antagonists is well presented while that on morbidity and mortality illuminates some of the