Manual of Haematology. Annabelle S.J. Baughan, Andrew S.B. Hughes, Keith G. Patterson and Louise Stirling. Pp. ix + 274, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £8.95.

In the preface, the authors state that this manual is meant as a guide to the practical management of patients with haematological disorders, and I think that they have succeeded admirably in their aim. That they are practising clinical haematologists comes over clearly, and there were many interesting practical points made. The best parts of the book were those where these practical experiences came through most clearly – for instance, in the chapters on cytotoxic therapy, in terminal care in haematological malignancy, and in the description of practical procedures.

With the restraints of the format, it is always difficult not to end up with lists of diseases, or causes, or symptoms, and this makes the earlier part of the book more artificial, although no less full of useful pieces of information than the last part. The style also means that equal stress is given to rarity (such as neuroblastoma cells mimicking acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, as one example of a leukaemoid reaction), as to the very common.

The style also presents much advice on what can reasonably be undertaken by a relative beginner in clinical haematology, and what should be left to the expert. For instance, I would be unhappy if a patient with thrombocytosis were started on a large dose of hydroxurea (2–5 g/day) without close haematological supervision. Also, there are a few minor errors – the use of mCi for ^{32}P is out-of-date, and a few cross-references have been left blank.

However, I think this is an excellent little book, well-produced, clear and interesting, and I will be delighted to see it sticking out of the pockets of the junior haematological staff.

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Medical Care of the Elderly, Second edition. M.R.P. Hall, W.J. MacLennan and M.D.W. Lye. Pp. viii + 192, illustrated. John Wiley, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto, Singapore, 1986. £9.95.

This is the second edition of a small, attractively produced book written for the multi-disciplinary team. It is intended as an introduction to the specialty and as a 'handbook' of information about the medical management of old people in hospital and at home.

The book starts with nine case histories. These are frequently referred to in the first six chapters, which discuss the organization of geriatric services and the reasons for adopting a special approach to older patients. Following this there are sections dedicated to separate systems of the body. Finally, the problems of brain failure and incontinence are covered, with a concluding chapter on terminal care.

On the whole, the book is comprehensive and packed with vital information on the medicine of old age, although I expected more mention of iatrogenic disease, septicæmia

and enteral feeding. In some sections there is unnecessary emphasis on investigation and drug therapy, which may deter the non-medical reader. This kind of information also dates easily (there is a reference to guinea-pig culture in the section on tuberculosis). A problem-orientated approach in the central section of the book could have strengthened its appeal. However, in its original intentions it still succeeds admirably and I would warmly recommend it to anyone requiring an introduction to the specialty.

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Mental Handicap – a Handbook of Care. Edited by Eamon Shanley. Pp. ix + 336, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £13.95.

This book is written for those who have the day-to-day management of both children and adults with a mental handicap, especially for those who are in training in nursing and residential care. New works are required to respond to the latest RNMH syllabus and this is one of the first. The contributors are from nursing, social work and various therapies and almost all are from Scotland. The emphasis throughout the book is on ways to improve the quality of life through practical and personal assistance with sufficient theory to enable this to happen with skill and sensitivity.

There are certain aspects which will no doubt be improved in a subsequent edition, the line drawings of Down's syndrome and Hurler's syndrome, for example, are unhelpful and stigmatising and the origin of Makaton is inaccurate (page 83). The issue of what is informed consent and who can give such consent could also with benefit be included when the book is revised.

The layout is particularly pleasing with summaries punctuating the text and with a clear exposition of the contents of each chapter. This is a useful book for those in professions supplementary to medicine and will help to increase the knowledge and skills of those in the multidisciplinary team.

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Patient-controlled Analgesia. Proceedings of the First International Workshop on Patient-controlled Analgesia, held at Leeds Castle, Kent, United Kingdom, in June 1984. Edited by M. Harmer, M. Rosen and M.D. Vickers. Pp. xv + 199, illustrated. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Boston, Palo Alto, Melbourne, 1985. £18.00.

This is a fascinating book for those concerned about better postoperative pain relief, and for those interested in the medicinal use of strong opioid analgesics. It is easy to read and the information provided is readily assimilated. In practice, the term patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) still