drugs not on our market are given – e.g. mesoridazine, halazepam, deanol; there are spelling errors oxazepam – and potentially dangerous typographic errors – chlormezanone's trade name is given as Thorazine, and in the next line chlorpromazine's as Trancopal.

It would have been useful if Chapter 8, Research Methods, had appeared near the beginning of the book, so that, for example, the value of global ratings had been considered. These have indeed been acceptable in the past, but the endorsement of their value is given (p. 270) by a 1974 paper, and more recent work, such as the 1982 reference also given on p. 270, makes the more up-to-date position clear – 'global clinical impression cannot be justified as the sole index of drug effects in mentally retarded people'. Many of the research papers listed in the Tables on the effects of thioridazine or haloperidol use only global ratings. It would have given a more balanced viewpoint if some authoritative opinion had been quoted, e.g. Aman 1985, '... shoddy methodology ... the use of clinical global impressions "[are reasons why]" despite perhaps 200 or 300 relevant studies published in English, it is remarkably hard to formulate a picture, at least with confidence, of what these drugs do'.

In conclusion, therefore, while interested readers can be grateful for the many references and topics covered in this reasonably small and relatively inexpensive book, it must be read with a critical mind, as it is far from the definitive textbook on this important and still evolving subject.

Reference

Aman, M.G. Drugs in mental retardation: treatment or tragedy? *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Developmental Disabilities* 1985, **10**: 215–226.

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Caterham,
Surrey CR3 5YA.

Psychiatric Examinations (Notes on eliciting and recording clinical information in psychiatric patients) 2nd Edition. Institute of Psychiatry & The Maudsley Hospital. Pp. 75. Oxford University Press. Oxford, New York, Tokyo, 1987. £6.95.

This is the second edition of a booklet first published in 1973. The Maudsley Hospital represents the acme of psychiatric recording and although many trainees there have rued its preoccupation with accuracy that sometimes amounts to pedantry, most have realised its long-term value. The first edition was justifiably popular and has

been reprinted six times. This new edition is more comprehensive with new advice on the assessment of forensic, elderly and mentally handicapped patients and a particularly good section on the examination of children.

The booklet will continue to be valuable for psychiatrists in training and retain its authority as a quasi-official statement of good recording practice. It is a pity that more advice on shortening the psychiatric interview to essentials was omitted as in most forms of psychiatric practice there is insufficient time to carry out the recommended procedure described here. Most people can follow a good recipe but the skill of the cook is in improvisation. My other concern is the price; at nearly 10p a page and virtually no illustrations the sales projections must assume that most psychiatrists already have a copy and so will not buy a second. The publishers must think again or they will indeed have the poor sales they have anticipated.

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Residents Handbook of Pediatrics, Seventh edition, edited by W.B. Abelson & R.G. Smith. Pp xxvi+909. B.C. Decker Inc, Toronto, Philadelphia, 1988. £21.50.

Despite containing over 900 pages of information, this handbook weighs only 512g (18oz), and will fit into a lab-coat pocket. It is comprehensive, and contains new chapters on adolescent medicine, psychosocial problems and epidemiology. Headings, tables and most diagrams are in red, and the text is clearly organised and logically subdivided. The indexing is thorough, and emergency subjects are highlighted in red. References are up-to-date. The transatlantic flavour (epinephrine, isoproterenol, diaper dermatitis) is inevitable and unintrusive. The routine immunisation schedule differs from that recommended in the United Kingdom.

In view of this volume's overall excellence, there are some disturbing omissions. In the investigation of neonatal seizures there is no specific reference to lumbar puncture. Also omitted are (a) the role of inducing alkalosis in the management of persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn, (b) the search for sublingual trauma in suspected child abuse, (c) the use of oxygen in acute epiglottitis. Nevertheless this is a useful, informative and very practical handbook. I recommend it highly to general practitioners, and to all clinicians who practise community or hospital paediatrics.

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