Child Health – A Textbook for the DCH, edited by D. Harvey and I. Kovar. Pp. x + 454, 97 illustrations. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, Tokyo, New York, 1991. £32.50, paperback.

Do not be put off by the sub-title. The text is much more relevant to child health than the Diploma. The main concessions to the DCH are three pages on technique and 137 multiple-choice questions. Nearly all the questions have been covered by the text, and the answers are easily accessed by an excellent index. Less than half a dozen of the answers are seriously contentious.

The book is aimed specifically towards the needs of family doctors and community medical officers. Virtually all aspect of child health are included, with different specialists for each chapter, generally well chosen emerging experts who add to their reputations. There are very good reviews of child abuse, the principles of pharmacology and immunological disorders. There is little about the newer developments in genetics and ante-natal ultrasound diagnosis. Screening techniques for examining vision and hearing are glossed over, whereas they are likely to be pass or fail essentials of the clinical examination.

The great strength of this book is its emphasis on the practical problems that primary care and junior hospital doctors have to sort out quickly. It answers questions that repeatedly generate frustrating telephone calls for help to a consultant who is hard to locate. The new style family doctor, doing the practice child health surveillance, will find this book indispensable. I will recommend it to our junior doctors also, as a practical guide to diagnosis and management. It is far better value for money than the DCH itself.

A.N. Stanton
*Paediatric Department,
Scarborough Hospital,
Scarborough,
N. Yorkshire YO12 6PL.*

Health, Prevention and Economics, D.R. Cohen and J.B. Henderson. Pp. 175, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 1991. £15.00, paperback.

It is a good discipline, even if it can be an exacting one, for doctors to take account of non-medical perceptions of health and health services. Economists have been particularly keen to satisfy this (usually unstated) need, and their writings tend to be more lucid than those of other sociologists. This book is commendably clear, and well illustrated with figures, tables and examples. Unlike most books on health economics, it focuses particularly on prevention, and for me it grasps the heart of the matter – that preventive measures are neither universally effective, nor universally futile, but each has to be assessed on its own merits, using economic as well as other criteria. As the authors themselves say, 'very simple yet not widely recognised'.

Two hopefully helpful criticisms. It may be better to judge health status on data derived directly from patients, for example, the Nottingham Health Profile, than from the vicarious judgments of panels not themselves involved. And a more personal one – the claim (p. 159) that the so-called Black Report 'did not include measures that involved the NHS among its recommendations' is an

economy of truth – we recommended a 'district action programme' relating to both health and welfare (though in the event we might as well have recommended platinum bed-pans).

Sir Douglas Black
*Duchess Close,
Whitchurch-on-Thames,
Reading, RG8 7EN.*

The Management of Limb Inequality, edited by M.B. Menelaus. Pp. viii + 256, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, 1991. £55, hardback.

This volume is the latest in a respected series of monographs from Churchill Livingstone. It is largely based on the experience of managing limb length inequality at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, Australia. Indeed, nearly half the contributors come from that hospital, with further contributions from Florida, Toronto, Los Angeles and New York.

The volume is valuable in drawing together a number of methods of tackling the problem of limb length inequality. Some of the methods to which chapters are devoted, such as growth plate arrest or shortening of the contralateral normal limb are more of historical interest. The volume suffers from failing to include contributors from any of those in Russia, Italy or Spain who have been most innovative in this field in the last decade. Those searching for a complete review of the potential of the Ilizarov Fixator, for example, will need to look elsewhere. Nevertheless there are helpful accounts of the management of the large and the small foot, and limb length discrepancy in the upper limb.

The book is a worthy addition to the series and will prove helpful for the general orthopaedic surgeon hoping to remain informed as to the most appropriate methods of managing these important problems.

R. Coombs
*Department of Orthopaedics,
Hammersmith Hospital,
London W12 0HS.*

Blood – Atlas and Sourcebook of Hematology, Carola T. Kapff and James H. Jandl. Pp. ix + 157, 255 illustrations. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, London, Toronto, 1991. £70, hardback.

This atlas contains around 1,200 photomicrographs, many of which are quite superb and the authors love their subject. However, I cannot recommend this book for several reasons. Firstly, the authors have failed to identify their market, the atlas is too complex for a non-haematologist and yet of no value as a reference work. Secondly, although it appears superficially well presented with a standard format (between three and eight photomicrographs on each right hand page which are discussed on the opposite page) it is difficult to read; the typeface is too small, references to the photographs are buried in the text and there is too much waffle. The section on non-Hodgkin's lymphomas is poor and refers to only two classification systems: Rappaport's (1956) and the 'Working Formulation'. The first of these is very out of date and the second is not meant to be used as a classification system but as a form of Esperanto to permit com-