If you are a child psychiatrist in Romania who is thinking about moving to Spain, then you might want to take a look at this book. In 31 chapters, written by local child psychiatrists, it describes the history of child psychiatry, the diagnostic and classification systems used, the therapeutic methods and the organisation of services in European countries from A (Austria) to U (United Kingdom). Rather limited information is given about research. The text is basically a series of administrative reports on the status of child psychiatry in each country. While some countries, e.g. France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom have more comprehensive services and training programmes than others, child psychiatry across nations shows more similarities than differences: the use of ICD-10, an eclectic biopsychosocial therapeutic approach including psychotherapies and medication, cooperation with medical and non-medical disciplines, and public governmental funding. Occasionally a particularly idiosyncratic therapy appears, such as ‘balneotherapy’, an unexplained treatment in Ukraine. The growth of European child psychiatry has been impressive over the past 45 years since the first symposium of European child psychiatrists. However, the material presented in this book would have been more suitably delivered in another symposium about the progress of European child psychiatry rather than in a book whose parochial nature makes it of minimal interest to readers of this journal.

Marc A Forman

Motor Coordination Disorders in Children – Developmental Clinical Psychology and Psychiatry Volume 39
By David Sugden and Helen Wright
ISBN 0 7619 0999 0

According to the authors, this book provides an overview of the available literature on motor coordination disorders in children within a developmental framework. The book is intended for a broad readership ranging from parents to professionals. In keeping with this intent, the authors present a great deal of information in a very readable form. Current topics in the area are covered in a clear and concise way and, as such, the book is an excellent resource, presenting a comprehensive overview of the latest theories and research regarding coordination problems in children.

The authors begin with a discussion of the issue of classification and terminology, acknowledging it as an unresolved problem. Next, both historical and current theories of motor development are presented. The authors propose that dynamical systems and ecological models be used to understand children with motor coordination problems. The chapter on identification and assessment provides a good summary and critique of the available instruments. The authors discuss the outstanding issues in identification and assessment pointing out there is no gold standard. The complexity of the disorder is highlighted in chapters four and five where the nature of the disorder, underlying the deficits, associated problems and developmental progression are presented. The chapter on intervention provides a good summary of the current thinking on approaches to the treatment of children with coordination difficulties, contrasting process oriented and task oriented approaches. The summary of the efficacy literature on existing interventions is concluded with the suggestion that the available research is inadequate and that more and better studies are necessary to inform intervention practices. In the final chapter, the authors summarize the major questions and issues in the field. They argue for a more theoretically-driven approach to understanding the nature of motor coordination disorders in children, suggesting that much could be learned form the field of motor control and learning.

In summary, this is a very readable book that can be a good resource for parents and professionals alike. It presents a good overview of the present state of the art and identifies outstanding issues and emphasizes the significance of the problems experienced by children with coordination difficulties.

A Mandich and H J Polatajko

Clinical Neuropsychiatry of Childhood (Open meeting)
Royal Society of Medicine, London. 11th September 2000
Organised by Michael Prendergast

Management and Treatment of Autism (Open meeting)
Royal Society of Medicine, London. 5th October 2000
Organised by Gregory O’Brien and Claire Burns

What Obstetricians Can Do to Prevent Disability (Open meeting)
Royal Society of Medicine, London. 23rd October 2000
Organised by Martin Bax

For further information, and to book places at open meetings, contact Vesna Milenkovic, CME Department, The Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole St, London W1M 8AE. Tel: 0207 290 2988. E-mail: Vesna.Milenkovic@roysocmed.ac.uk