flawed as a guide to the latter because it says little or nothing about the sources of the denominator data used in calculating mortality and morbidity rates, or about the variety of approaches used in descriptive studies of the relationship of disease frequency to time, place, and personal characteristics. The account of methods used in analytical studies which occupies most of the book can, on the other hand, be recommended most warmly. Although stated in the preface to be intended for those already trained in elementary epidemiology and biostatistics, the book is simply and lucidly written with many clearly worked examples. Even its explanations of such complex procedures as logistic regression and the matching of sample size to desired statistical power demand no more prior knowledge of statistics and epidemiology than is now taught in most British medical schools. Personally, I expect to use this book a lot; and I would recommend every epidemiological unit that engages in analytical studies to obtain a copy for its members' use if the price is too high for them to buy their own.

IAN LECK

*Department of Community Medicine,
University of Manchester*

Research in preventive community nursing care, Alison While. *Developments in Nursing Research* Volume 4. (Pp 230, £9.95) Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1986.

During the last ten years it has been possible to identify a shift in health care policy intent from hospital to community care. Running in parallel in emphasis, if not in practice, is a renewed interest in the potential value of preventive health care. Health visitors have been at the forefront of service provision in health promotion and preventive health care so it is fitting that a text should be devoted to research in this area.

This book is part of a series called "Developments in Nursing Research", the purpose of which is to publish literature reviews and original material with the aim of promoting nursing knowledge. Alison While draws together 15 diverse research-based studies in health visiting. The book is divided thematically into four parts. Part I looks at "health visiting as an occupation", and two studies are presented which are extremely good introductions to the historical origins of the occupation and provide some insights into why health visiting is as it is today. Chapter 3 is complementary and although the analysis of data is superficial it does provide an insight into how health visitors perceive their own work.

Part 2 subsumes three studies under the heading "prophylaxis and screening among pre-school

children". Of particular interest is Judy Edwards' chapter on "benchmarks in health visiting practice", giving an honest account of the difficulties in evaluating routine screening procedures using existing records, in this case the "master card". Part 3 brings together five studies under the heading "parental support". The studies address different issues and employ a variety of methods and all make an equal contribution. The final part is aptly named "other aspects of preventive health care". The chapter on "Health visitors' and social workers' perceptions of child care problems" uses an interesting method "the vignette technique". Unfortunately, it does not live up to expectations and is theoretically weak. Health visitors work in multiple locations and use a wide range of techniques to reach their target populations, and the contribution by Jean Orr on women's health groups provides a vivid insight into the potential benefits of group work and highlights in a readable form the problems a group facilitator might encounter. The last two chapters are most welcome as they centre on the elderly as the care group and remind the reader that health visiting is not necessarily concerned with maternal and child health.

I enjoyed reading this book and consider that it makes a valuable contribution to nursing. However, I think that like many multi-authored texts it would have benefited from a stronger introduction and some form of conclusion which might have drawn out recurrent themes for more open discussion. For example, "positive discrimination" is mentioned in a number of chapters, and this might have been a focus for further discussion in a conclusion. The editor's comments between each section of the book are an interesting idea which could have been used in a more discursive way to link the parts of the book together, but in their current form these comments merely repeat material in the introduction and alert us to the content of each chapter. Nevertheless, this book deserves a place on library shelves in schools of nursing and medicine and could be considered as compulsory reading for all health visitors and their students.

KAREN A LUKER

*Lecturer in Nursing,
University of Manchester*

Clinical aspects of AIDS and AIDS-related complex. Eds. Staquet M, Hemmer R, Baert A. (Pp 240 £25.00) Oxford University Press, 1986.

This book is the product of a symposium held in Brussels in October 1985, constituted by the EEC to pool clinical resources into examining the problems

posed by AIDS and HIV infection. It appears that all the participants at the meeting have submitted papers, covering the clinical, epidemiological, immunological, and therapeutic approaches to AIDS in Europe.

This book is essentially a meeting report and, by necessity, publication has been delayed until one year after the meeting. The papers presented have either been published in scientific journals in the meanwhile or have sunk without trace in the interim. There was an International Meeting in Paris in 1986, which has largely bypassed much of the message of this book.

On a positive note, the epidemiology from Europe presents some data from the more obscure corners: seropositivity to HIV in Athenian prostitutes; a 12-year history of serology in Switzerland; epidemiology of AIDS in Milan, etc. However, these data are, in many cases, 18 months out of date, which for such a fast-moving field is unacceptable.

I found tables to be misplaced (Fig 1, p75 belongs on p198, and *vice versa*), and I was surprised to see myself as second author on a paper I had never seen, and whose contents I found a poor reflection of my own work. If this is an indication of the other contributions, I worry about the general reliability of this book.

I feel this book contains information which is obtainable elsewhere. Clinicians will need more detail, epidemiologists need to be in the present, and immunologists require more rigorous justification of results.

It seems tragic that the EEC should be spending research money on publishing books of this sort when the same money would be better spent in more regular—unpublished—meetings. There are enough publications on AIDS already.

JONATHAN WEBER
*Institute of Cancer Research,
Royal Cancer Hospital*

The geography of non-infectious disease MSR Hutt and DP Burkitt (Pp 164; figs. £20-00) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

In their introduction, Professor Hutt and Dr Burkitt state that this book is intended to fill a gap in the literature on the geographical distribution and causes of non-infectious disease, particularly in the non-Western countries of the world. We are reminded that if it can be demonstrated that there are differences in the incidence or prevalence of a particular disease between population groups living in different geographical areas, socioeconomic circumstances, or cultural backgrounds, and that these observations cannot be explained by diagnostic failure or other bias

in the information, it is possible to formulate a hypothesis to explain these differences. Herein lies this book's value to a wide range of readers who are interested in the aetiology of non-infectious diseases in the United Kingdom and the direction in which to plan preventive strategies, as well as to overseas readers. Clinicians as well as community physicians and others interested in the wider aspects of health promotion and medical geographers will find interest in this well presented volume which I found eminently readable. Within its 164 pages it gives a wealth of useful information. The distribution of a variety of non-infectious diseases is described in different populations throughout the world. Each geographical description is followed by an aetiological hypothesis which is compatible with the genetic and/or environmental background of the populations living in particular regions or countries. Thirteen of the chapters treat the non-infectious diseases classified by anatomical system. Pathological as well as clinical manifestations of the diseases are included. One was left with three clear messages after reading this book. Firstly, that although it is generally accepted that most non-infectious diseases are multi-factorial in aetiology, there are two main influences which are responsible for the Western pattern of disease; these are cigarette smoking and the Western diet. Secondly, as elucidated by Sir Richard Doll in his foreword to this book, it may require nothing more abstruse than an ability to examine in an unprejudiced way the features of a society (or social groups within a society) in which the disease has characteristically occurred, to discover enough about the causation of a disease to enable it to be avoided in the future. Thirdly, that the geographical distribution of disease is one of the more fascinating aspects of medical science, as illustrated by the essential inclusion in any comprehensive work on the subject of Burkitt's lymphoma, named, of course, after one of this book's co-authors.

PETER GRIME
*District Medical Officer,
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Health Authority;
Honorary Lecturer,
Department of Geography, University of Lancaster*

Epidemiology of malignant melanoma. Recent Results in Cancer Research, Volume 102. Ed. Gallagher RP: (Pp 169, DM 98) Springer Verlag, 1986.

The literature on epidemiology of melanoma is large and growing fast; thus there is a useful place for a book offering up-to-date reviews in the subject. This 169-page volume arose from a meeting in Vancouver in 1984 (but includes many 1985 references) and contains