

**The Foetus and the new born: Recent Research.** *British Medical Bulletin.* 22, No. 1. 1966. Medical Department, British Council. Pp. 102. Price 30s. 0d.

This volume has been offered to the College library, not because many articles will be of immediate interest to family doctors, but because of the authority with which the contributors can speak on their own subject. Articles on immunity in the foetus and newborn, on developmental changes in the C.N.S. and cardiovascular system, on resuscitation of the asphyxiated infant and on heat regulators and temperature control in the human baby are particularly worth reading.

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## *Correspondence*

### ‘Inevitable’ and ‘preventable’ accidents

Sir,

In the report of the Wessex Faculty Study (*Between Ourselves* No. 5) some doubt is cast (and rightly so in my view) on Dr O’Keefe’s statement (*J. Coll. gen. Practit.* 1965, 10, 272) that “the majority of home accidents to children are preventable”. Unless authors define their terms we shall never be able to compare different series. The proportion of ‘preventable’ accidents varies in different reports according to the severity of accidents considered; the author’s definition, e.g. does ‘preventable’ mean at the time, or preventable by action taken at some other time; the ages of the children; and the definition of ‘accident’.

Using the definitions,

preventable = preventable by ordinary adult vigilance at the time  
 accident = a mishap included if it had medical attention,

in six years in general practice I saw 1,500 accidents to children under 15. Of these 204 were preventable, 159 doubtful and 1,137 not preventable. I hope to publish a full report on these accidents.

Grimsby.

D. A. MACLEOD.