

physiology in much more recent times. It was the acceptance of empirical discovery and the building up and testing of theory against fresh experience and experiment which brought these sciences to the dignity and authority they now have. We all recognize that not all illnesses can be explained in direct anatomical and physiological terms, so let us introduce the new subjects into the basic curriculum and their application into the clinical years of training without fearing that the next generation may judge us to have been ignorant fuddy-duddies for not having discovered more, faster.

Uxbridge.

PAUL FREELING.

### Drug Sensitivity

Sir,

I have recently come across two cases of abnormal response to two drugs in common use: one of allergy to lignocaine—which provoked a very severe reaction ten minutes after a dose of only 30 mg. (maker's maximum is 200 mg.); and a case of hypersusceptibility to glutethimide a fairly normal sleep dose of 500 mg. produced ten hours heavy sleep followed by twelve hours stuporosity—on several occasions.

Lignocaine is usually regarded as a "safe" local anaesthetic and according to the manufacturers literature is "free from allergic effects". Glutethimide is a much-used short/medium acting non-barbiturate hypnotic and generally considered free from side effects.

I would be interested to hear of similar experiences with either of these drugs.

King's Lynn.

HUGH FORD.

### Toxaemia of Pregnancy

Sir,

Dr Humphreys (*Journal* 32, August 1961, p. 405) has shown us clearly that there is a statistical connection between food intake and the appearance of toxaemia of pregnancy. This raises the question of why a particular woman should eat more when she is pregnant. Some work has been done which has suggested that certain psychological types of women are more liable to toxaemia than others. It seems that part of the train of events may be explained by this. Certainly, I noticed during six months at a hospital antenatal clinic that a far higher proportion of those telling me of loneliness at home were toxaemic than of those making no such complaint. Could it be that overeating is psychologically determined in those women constitutionally prone to toxaemia—that overeating and toxaemia are effects of one cause, not causes of each other?

Southampton.

JOHN L. STRUTHERS.