

More practical guide could have been given to investigation or management; for example, the reader will receive little help in the treatment of intestinal parasites or the evaluation of cholestatic jaundice. But one chapter stands free of any such criticism, that by K R Ramming on the management of malignancy of the gastrointestinal tract. This is an excellent and most helpful account of the medical and surgical options available to patients with malignant disease.

This book is not, and does not pretend to be, a conventional comprehensive textbook of gastroenterology. Rather it covers most successfully important and topical aspects of gastroenterology and for this reason will be read with appreciation and benefit by any clinician who has already acquired a background of knowledge in the specialty, but I am certain that senior undergraduates or those studying for a higher degree will use *Gastroenterology* to their advantage.

IAN A D BOUCHIER

**Treatment in clinical medicine. Gastrointestinal disease** Edited by C J C Roberts. (Pp. 236; illustrated; £9.00.) London: Springer-Verlag, 1983. Although the title of this book is *Gastrointestinal disease*, the title of the series is *Treatment in clinical medicine*. Thus the emphasis is on therapeutics. In the foreword it is stated that it is expected that the series will be particularly useful for the young hospital doctor in training, senior medical students, and those in established hospital or general practice. This is a wide spectrum at which to aim. In the preface it is stated that the aim of the book is to provide practical guidance to the hospital physician in the management of gastrointestinal disease. This must, of course, involve much more than therapeutics and although each chapter does initially address itself to pathophysiology, the concepts of diagnosis and some consideration of investigation, these are not considered in detail.

The book is divided into two parts, the first two-thirds consists of chapters on organs, diseases, or syndromes: thus oesophageal disease, peptic ulcer, and the malabsorption syndrome are the first three chapters. The second section is a consideration of clinical pharmacology in relation to the gastrointestinal tract. This is a useful introduction (or alternatively a timely revision) of pharmacological principles with brief assessments of particular drugs. Part, at least, of this section might with benefit have been placed before consideration of the individual disorders.

The chapter on nutrition reflects the due weight being given to this topic, which has now reached the

consciousness of gastroenterologists to the extent that it deserves.

By and large the information given in the book is didactic. It is not a matter of rehearsing various points of view but of stating what the author does, with a certain amount of justification given. Side effects of therapy have due weight but only the important side effects are mentioned. This is a considerable advantage as long as the book is not regarded as a source of reference for uncommon side effects. There is a drug index and a separate subject index. It might make for easier reference if these were combined.

The important question is whether there is a gap justifying a book of this sort. What it really represents is a series of essays on therapeutics with rather more leeway than is given in the usual textbook. Perhaps it is intended to be the equivalent of lectures or seminars in therapeutics. In this I feel the book succeeds, particularly with a view to the young hospital doctor and to senior medical students, provided that they realise that it is not intended to be exhaustive and that other sources are available for reference.

M S LOSOWSKY

**Gastrointestinal disease: pathophysiology, diagnosis, management** 3rd ed Edited by M H Sleisinger and J S Fordtran. (Pp. 1850; illustrated; £75.00.) Philadelphia: W B Saunders, 1983.

It is a decade since the publication of the first edition of *Gastrointestinal disease*; the appearance of the third edition is witness to the fact that it is widely recognised as the standard text by which others will be judged. It is an all-American book in structure and in approach; with the exception of one Francophone Canadian, all the contributors live and work in the USA. This is reflected in the emphasis on pathophysiology – and on a detailed knowledge of normal physiology – which contrasts (favourably, in the opinion of this reviewer) with the more didactic and ‘clinical’ approach of European texts. Not only is it a comprehensive review of the diagnosis and management of disease, but also it contains accounts of gastrointestinal physiology which are detailed enough to satisfy the needs of both undergraduates and postgraduates. The stress on science is neither decorative nor doctrinaire; it is integral to the method of editors and contributors alike, and it is reflected in the comprehensive referencing of each chapter.

There have been many changes since the last edition and the book is remarkably up to date – for example, the chapter on duodenal ulcer includes 1982 references obviously added in proof. Nor have

the editors been content with cosmetic changes, for, of the 95 contributors, 34 are new. There is a new section on special diagnostic procedures which is comprehensive and well illustrated and another new and useful section on nutritional management. There is one major weakness in the book. American scientists have made major contributions to the study of motor function and dysfunction in the digestive tract; this was reflected in Johnson's massive *Physiology of the gastrointestinal tract* in which 27% of the contents were devoted to muscle and nerve function. In this book, only 4% of the book deals with motility. In his foreword, Tom Almy mentions that 'among the 19 new chapters are those on . . . recent progress in the study of motility disorders . . .'. No such chapter is listed in the contents although there is a short chapter on 'Movement of the small and large intestine' by Cohen and Snape, who cite 17 of their own papers among the 96 references. Except for admirable chapters by Pope on the oesophagus, there is no practical advice on the measurement of motility, and although Gray reviews breath tests in the assessment of malabsorption, there is no mention of these as indicators of intestinal transit. To be fair, the clinical application or relevance of recent motility research is not always clear, but while this may be pertinent, it does not account for the failure to describe what is known in detail comparable to that applied elsewhere. The defect would seem to stem from the lack of editorial interest or expertise – or both – in this field. In this context, however, it is only fair to concede bias on the part of the reviewer; other readers will have other views. All in all, there is enough that is new to justify the purchase of this edition even if you have a previous edition.

In summary: carefully planned, carefully written, comprehensive, up to date, produced to a high standard and still way out in front.

DAVID WINGATE

**Recent advances in hepatology** Vol 1 Edited by H C Thomas and R N M MacSween. (Pp. 259; illustrated; £24.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1983.

The torrent of publications in liver disease leaves all but the most dedicated journal reader bewildered. In many fields there seems to be a burgeoning literature but little improvement in the basic conceptual framework or real understanding. This, the first volume of the series, aims to give a practical update for clinicians and pathologists interested in liver disease. The editors have chosen 13 topics and the contributors are all well known and actively

engaged in research in the field.

It is impossible, because of constraints of space, to comment on each contribution but the reviewer particularly enjoyed the contribution by Dienstag on the current state of knowledge on non-A, non-B hepatitis. We cannot expect much more progress in this field until the viruses and the serological responses are reliably characterised. Halothane related liver disease used to be the cause of heated controversy, but the mechanisms of damage have now been unravelled and are lucidly reviewed by Neuberger and Davis. The principles illustrated may be applicable to alcohol and other drug hepatotoxicity. Simple guidelines for drugs prescribed for patients with liver disease are given by Bircher on the basis of current pharmacokinetic data. Primary biliary cirrhosis is subjected to critical analysis by E A Jones with particular reference to the immunopathology and possible mechanisms of damage. His recommendation that penicillamine should be used only in the context of a controlled trial is widely accepted. Hepatobiliary disease in childhood is reviewed by Howard and Mowat who emphasise the importance of early specialist investigations if the considerable benefits of surgery in selected cases are to be exploited. Gall stone dissolution and the relative merits of chenodeoxycholic acid and ursodeoxycholic acid is the subject of a well referenced paper by Bateson and Bouchier. Interferon, adenine arabinoside, and other approaches to management in chronic hepatitis B are well covered in the article by Howard Thomas and Weller and they address the important question of how to eliminate the virus after it becomes integrated into the host genome and is insusceptible to current antiviral therapy. Progress here is probably vital if the development of hepatocellular carcinoma is to be prevented. Dame Sheila Sherlock reviews the present status of treatment of portal hypertension. Injection sclerotherapy seems here to stay, at least meantime, but the role of beta blockers is much less certain and British experience is not as encouraging as that from France.

Other articles cover genetic aspects of liver disease (I R Mackay), acute liver failure (Gimson and Roger Williams), alcoholic liver disease (MacSween), copper metabolism (Sternlieb), and bile acid metabolism (Everson and Kern).

The editors are to be congratulated on this first volume which deserves to be widely read by general physicians and gastroenterologists. There are, however, a range of very similar publications originating from Europe and USA, and the choice of topics for the next volume needs careful consideration if widespread duplication is to be avoided.

I M MURRAY-LYON