

**Gastrointestinal Emergencies** Edited by A Torsoli. (Pp. 260; illustrated; £9.55.) W B Saunders: London, Philadelphia and Toronto. 1981.

This issue of *Clinics in Gastroenterology* is presented in a smart green dust jacket in the hope that it may achieve a wider market than just those who subscribe to the series. It covers most gastrointestinal emergencies and, like all multi-author books, the quality of the chapters varies widely. A problem faced by all the authors, as pointed out in the introduction, is the paucity of controlled data testing the benefit of different diagnostic and therapeutic manoeuvres in the disorders discussed, and many of the contributions therefore suffer from a rather anecdotal tone.

The book starts well with a precise and very readable account of the physiology of body fluids. There follows a disappointing section on upper gastrointestinal bleeding which includes uncritical discussion of procedures such as ice-cold saline lavage, intra-arterial infusion of vasopressin, and the use of specialised units. Subsequent chapters include an excellent account of toxic megacolon, although it contains much that can be found in previous reviews by the same authors. Other very useful reviews include those on hepatic failure, pancreatitis, and paediatric gastrointestinal emergencies. The section on the acute abdomen, a most difficult subject to review, is a brave attempt that includes so much detail, particularly in tabular form, that this reader was left more confused at the end than the beginning.

One would not expect to find new information in a book such as this, its main value being to provide fairly up-to-date reviews on a broad subject in the same covers. This book adequately fills a gap in the continuing and generally excellent series of *Clinics in*

*Gastroenterology*, and many will find particular chapters of interest. It does, however, add little to what can be found in the standard textbooks on gastroenterology and is unlikely to become a best seller.

M W DRONFIELD

**Tumors of the Pancreas** Edited by A R Moosa. (Pp. 560; illustrated; \$74.00.) Williams and Wilkins: Maryland, USA, 1980.

Few people are better qualified to edit a book on pancreatic tumours than Dr Moosa, who is well respected in the English-speaking world for his work in this field. He contributes to 11 of the 20 chapters, most of which are based on experience in Chicago. There are only three British authors, all of them at one time training in surgery at the University of Chicago. The scope is comprehensive, including surgical anatomy, physiology, pathology, diagnostic techniques, and treatment. The book will mainly attract clinical readers, for whom the balance is good overall. However, some will balk at the chapter on experimental tumours, which runs to 122 pages. Both text and references are remarkably up to date, even in those areas where developments have recently been rapid. Ultrasonography and computed tomography are dealt with in a balanced fashion, despite ignoring many British contributions. Ultrasound guided percutaneous biopsy deserves more detailed explanation and discussion. Dr Moosa might consider for future editions a chapter bringing together the various non-operative palliative techniques. In this book, preoperative biliary drainage and endoprotheses have a rather brief mention in the chapter on investigations, and coeliac plexus blockade rates only one sentence in the chapter on surgical anatomy. The chapter on ERCP is authoritative and

balanced; the references are heavily weighted west of the Atlantic. The reviewer was particularly pleased to read the emphasis on disinfection of instruments, and problems of radiographic interpretation. The incidence of pancreas divisum given in this chapter is more accurate than that provided from necropsy data in the first chapter.

This book provides little that is new or unpublished elsewhere. However, Dr Moosa is to be congratulated on bringing it all together at this time. The conclusion to Lord Smith's foreword to this book is entirely appropriate: 'This book is timely. It presents an admirable blend of the scientific and the clinical and is complete without being over-complicated. Above all, it is readable and logical and never loses sight of the central issue, the treatment of patients'.

P B COTTON

## Books received

**Bile Acids and Lipids** Edited by G Paumgartner, A Steihl, and W Gerok. (Pp. 384; illustrated; £24.95). Lancaster, Lancs: MTP Press. 1981.

**Progress in Clinical and Biological Research Vol 61. Nutrition and Child Health Perspectives for the 1980s.** Edited by R C Tsang and Buford Lee Nichols, Jr. (Pp. 224; \$22.00). New York: Liss Inc. 1981.

**Management of Anaerobic Infections: prevention and treatment** By A T Willis, P H Jones, and S Reilly. (Pp. 97; £9.50). Chichester: Wiley. 1981.

**The Genetics of Coeliac Disease** Edited by R B McConnell. (Pp. 301; illustrated; £24.95). MTP Press: Lancaster. 1981.

**Endocytosis and Exocytosis in Host Defence** Edited by L B Edebo, L Enerback, and O I Stendahl. (Pp. 272; illustrated; SwFr 164, DM 196, US\$ 98.25). Karger AG: Basel. 1981.