

Book reviews

Inflammatory bowel diseases Edited by R N Allan, M R B Keighley, J Alexander-Williams, and C Hawkins. (Pp. 583; illustrated; price not stated) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1983.

Inflammatory bowel disease is the scourge of our speciality and must occupy the majority of our time and thought. A comprehensive encyclopaedia of these disorders will be welcomed by gastroenterologists everywhere. This book is a major reference source by four editors and 84 contributors in 68 chapters, truly an encyclopaedia. Every aspect of the diseases and their physiology, pathology, and treatment is encompassed; most in succinct and well-edited sections.

The major problem in such an undertaking is balance and at first I thought the diseases had been swamped by the peripheral aspects. But after going over it I was overcome with admiration for the scope and comprehensiveness. Not a book to sit down and read but a large volume to be on every gastroenterologist's bookshelf for reference. Nothing that I wanted to know has been omitted (though much that I would like to know is frankly admitted to be uncertain). It is good to have such a scholarly and complete book that should appeal to surgeons as much as physicians, and investigators, as well as those engaged in diagnostic procedures.

Most of the chapters have excellent conclusions, if these alone were read a splendid review of the subject is immediately at hand. The international cast of contributors are to be thanked and the editors congratulated on the distribution and lack of overlap. Certainly this is a work to be highly recommended.

B CREAMER

Peptic ulcer (Clinical surgery international, vol 7) Edited by D C Carter. (Pp. 219; illustrated; £19) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1983.

While some *Gut* readers may groan 'not another book on peptic ulcer', the professional ulcerologist will savour with relish this latest survey and add it to all the others on this topic on his shelves. Any general reader wishing to learn about peptic ulcer can safely pay his £19 and get his money's worth. Although the book comes in a series on clinical surgery there is nothing specifically surgical about the 14 chapters, only four of which are operative: vagotomy (Becker and Kelly), for duodenal ulcer (Jamieson), for gastric ulcer (Johnson), and long term sequelae of ulcer surgery (Cuschieri).

Naturally, David Carter's editorship guarantees a

choice of acknowledged experts writing authoritative chapters. There are few novelties, however, in epidemiology (Langman), acid-pepsin pathophysiology (Olbe), mucosal defences (O'Brien), medical management (Misiewicz), recurrent ulcer (Stabile and Passaro), endocrine syndromes (Joffe), and gastric cancer (Keane). Most of these authors have written similar chapters in similar books before.

I particularly enjoyed two chapters, both from Scotland, a country distinguished for its high annual incidence of duodenal ulcer and for the quantity and quality of its ulcerologists. Crean and Holden's 'Problem areas in diagnosis' not only describes their computer analysis of symptoms and causes of dyspepsia, but also critically compares and contrasts the successes and errors of single contrast and double contrast barium meals, with those of upper gastrointestinal endoscopy. Small admits that 'failure is not a popular subject', and then analyses the problems, their causes and their management ending his critique by reminding us that after operations from peptic ulcer 'the ultimate failure, premature death, is smoking-related and awaits the impact of health education'.

J H BARON

Current histopathology: vol 6 Atlas of gastrointestinal pathology as seen on biopsy By I M P Dawson (Pp. 158; illustrated; £34.95) Lancaster: MTP Press, 1983.

This atlas is for histopathologists and one of a comprehensive series covering all the body systems. Professor Dawson expresses the hope that he has produced a 'practical working bench book for those interpreting biopsies'. He has succeeded as our departmental copy is always open on the bench by the microscopes. Receiving a review copy eases the demand on our one volume.

The book has 21 chapters organised in the standard manner according to level in the gastrointestinal tract and basic pathology – for example, inflammatory, neoplastic, etc. Each chapter has up to three pages of text, and the photographs – six to a page – come between two pages of text or follow at the end of the chapter. A short list of pertinent references concludes each section. The picture captions are short, the information being in the text rather than below the illustrations as is the style of some atlas. Although it is an atlas of biopsy pathology, when relevant key macroscopic pictures are included.

In general the standard of illustration is good but there are a small number over which Professor

Dawson should take up the cudgels against the publishers. The colour in these bears no relation to the standard red and blue of haematoxylin and eosin.

Most appealing is Professor Dawson's personal touch throughout the text. One is given his opinion and experiences, not an impersonal account of diseases common to most textbooks. The book by modern standards is not expensive and histopathologists aside I am sure it is of value to clinicians. A quick glance at the right picture and you are fully armed to argue the toss with your pathologist at the weeks gastrointestinal conference.

ASHLEY B PRICE

Clinical reactions to food Edited by Professor M H Lessof. (Pp. 222; illustrated; \$14.50.) Chichester: Wiley, 1983.

In recent years there has been growing interest in the role of specific foods in provoking disease. Despite the obvious importance of the gut in food reactions, gastroenterologists have not been prominent in this field, and most of the impetus has been provided by practitioners of fringe medicine whose claims of the importance of 'food allergy' have been so sweeping as to excite derision rather than to promote scientific research. Professor Lessof, therefore, is to be congratulated on producing the first book which objectively documents the known facts of the relationship between specific foods and diseases.

Perhaps the most interesting contributions include those on 'Food allergy in childhood' by Professor J F Soothill, and 'Reactions to foods in adults' by Professor Lessof himself. There are other, important contributions on 'Immunology and physiology of digestion' by Anne Ferguson and Stephan Strobel, and 'Coeliac disease, inflammatory bowel disease and food intolerance' by W T Cooke and G K T Holmes. It was perhaps unnecessary to include an article on the psychiatric aspects of eating, and it is unfortunate that the excellent contribution by Dr Moneret-Vautrin, which is probably the most important in the book in terms of understanding the mechanisms of these reactions, should have been entitled 'False food allergy', a term which has unfortunate connotations suggesting that such a food reaction is psychological.

In the years to come the attention of gastroenterologists will be drawn more and more to the problem of what their patients eat. This book makes an excellent introduction for those who wish to keep abreast of these problems.

J O HUNTER

The digestive system By R J Bolt, P E S Palmer, B H Ruebner, and D W Watson. (Pp. 429; illustrated; £22.50.) New York: John Wiley, 1983. This is a short soft backed book covering the whole of the alimentary tract, pancreas, and liver. It is clearly aimed at American undergraduate medical students. For the most part chapters are organ based and each begins with a description of the normal anatomy and function followed by a review of the methods of evaluating that organ by radiological, pathological, and other techniques. Finally, there are descriptions of diseases of the relevant organ in which an attempt is made to relate the disease and its manifestations to disorders of structure and function. These chapters are thus the result of a laudable effort to bring together the normal anatomy and physiology with clinical disease. Unfortunately, the final result is somewhat unbalanced and clinical aspects receive a rather superficial treatment compared with radiology for example. Thus there is rather more on Hirschsprung's disease than there is on Crohn's disease; the irritable bowel syndrome receives only a half a page of text; diseases of the anus and rectum are dealt with in one page, almost as much as Schatzky's ring receives. In parts the text is outdated and the references for background reading are often to old rather than new literature. There are a few errors. For example, tannic acid is suggested as being a useful adjunct to barium enema. Gastric ulcers are said to occur commonly at the junction of the pyloric and duodenal mucosa and pirenzepine is misspelt.

The book is clearly aimed at an undergraduate level in the United States. Postgraduates in the UK will find the clinical aspects dealt with too superficially for them.

L A TURNBERG

Esophageal function in health and disease Edited by Donald O Castell and L F Johnson. (Pp. 372; illustrated; \$32.50.) Barking, Essex: Applied Science Publishers, 1983.

The editors of this book are unnecessarily modest in the claims they make for it. They maintain that there is no need for a comprehensive new book on clinical disorders of the oesophagus, and that they have simply produced an account of oesophageal function aimed at clinicians. In my view the result has been a good book on oesophageal disease. Both editors are experts in the study of oesophageal function, a proper starting point for the discussion of an actively mobile organ, but its anatomy and structural disorders are comprehensively covered – for