

## Notes and activities

### Complete Volumes of *Gut*

Swets & Zeitlinger, PO Box 810, 2160 SZ Lisse, The Netherlands, has available from stock volumes 1-6 of *Gut*. If sufficient interest exists volumes 7-16 will be reprinted in the near future. Please address your enquiries to the above-mentioned company.

## Books

**Medical Aspects of Dietary Fiber** Edited by G A Spiller and R McPherson Kay. (Pp 300. Illustrated. £32.50.) Plenum Medical: New York/London. 1980.

This comprehensive volume is directed at physicians, clinical nutritionists, and investigators in fibre research. It provides information on the effects of different fibres on gut function; recapitulates the evidence for a relationship between fibre and diverticular disease, colon cancer, and obesity; and summarises the important effects of fibre on lipid and carbohydrate metabolism. An authoritative list of contributors ensures that the book is always reasonable. In some areas—for example, fibre and the small intestine—there are few hard data and some padding is evident. In the area of plasma and biliary lipids the different fibres have such diverse effects that no coherent message emerges. Perhaps the strongest part of the book is the section on the effects of fibre on carbohydrates, metabolism, and diabetes. There is plenty in this book for both ardent advocates of fibre and those who still remain sceptical of its capacity to change anything other than stool weight.

V CHADWICK

**A Colour Atlas of Nutritional Disorders** By Donald S McLaren. (Pp 109. Illustrated. £15.00.) Wolfe Medical Publications: London. 1981.

Of all diseases those due to nutritional deficiencies are usually the most amenable to treatment, provided that the particular deficiency can be recognised and the nutrient that is lacking supplied. Failure to initiate highly effective treatment usually reflects failure to recognise the clinical signs of nutritional deficiencies. Moreover, in the countries in which these diseases are most fre-

quently encountered laboratory procedures for their detection are often beyond the resources available. Any means that can be provided to assist their clinical detection are therefore of the utmost importance, and without doubt good illustrations are of far greater value than descriptive words.

For these and other reasons the colour atlas of nutritional disorders is a valuable and important book. Not only could it be an aid to those involved in teaching, but it would be a valuable addition to hospital libraries, particularly in the third world.

Every disease dealt with is beautifully illustrated and the descriptive text can consequently be kept to a minimum. The first part deals with the various aspects of protein-energy-malnutrition with both clinical and radiological aids to diagnosis. The second part deals quite magnificently with vitamin deficiencies and toxicity. It contains over 120 illustrations, most of which are in colour. The third part on element, water and electrolyte deficiency and toxicity is supported by profuse clinical, haematological, and radiological photographs, again mostly in colour. Then come chapters on diet-responsive metabolic disorders and on food toxins, with a short final chapter on diseases of uncertain aetiology.

Altogether a book to be highly recommended. One would like to see more diseases dealt with in this superbly pictorial manner.

D P BURKITT

**Medical Complications of Obesity** Edited by M Mancini, B Lewis, and F Contardo. (Pp 407. Illustrated. £20.80; \$50.) Academic Press: London. 1981.

This book consists of the papers presented at a large symposium in Naples in June 1978. It contains seven sections relating obesity to diabetes, hyperlipidaemia, liver function, cardio-respiratory complications, reproduction and endocrinology, joint and bone disease, psychological aspects, and a last section dealing with the complications of treating obesity. Each section is headed by authoritative papers from internationally recognised experts, whose observations have often been already published elsewhere, and is followed by papers largely from Italian sources. Many papers are very interesting but the disparate elements do not

make a satisfactory whole. Moreover, the conference was made enjoyable and instructive by the lively discussion that followed each paper. These are not available in this book, which, at £20.80, can therefore not be wholeheartedly recommended to the general reader.

T R E PILKINGTON

**Topics in Gastroenterology 8** Edited by S C Truelove and H J Kennedy (Pp 301 + index. Illustrated. £16.00.) Blackwell Scientific Publications: Oxford. 1980.

This volume, the eighth in a series 'designed to provide gastroenterologists and non-specialists with an informed and up-to-date account of selected topics of current interest' successfully achieves that aim, though at a price which could lessen its appeal to the general reader. The twenty-five topics cover parenteral feeding, the treatment of Crohn's disease, and aspects of ulcerative colitis, with a concluding miscellany of pseudomembranous and ischaemic colitis followed by surgery for obesity and hyperlipidaemia.

Probably because this publication is a transcript of a series of lectures, the topics on parenteral feeding are very repetitive. Several deal with 'angio access' and the Oxford regimen is tabulated twice. However, the biochemical background to parenteral nutrition is well described and practical details clearly set out. The section on the treatment of Crohn's disease contains a succinct review covering surgical and nutritional aspects before summarising the results of drug trials, and topics deal with medical and surgical treatment in more detail. The section on ulcerative colitis starts with a good review of aetiological theories, emphasising the immunological disturbances. Later topics largely reflect the Oxford experience of this disease and are well supported by data. These include ulcerative colitis in childhood and pregnancy (practical advice given), life with an ileostomy by a satisfied male customer (an 'ostomist'), and a discussion of both ileorectal anastomosis and the continent ileostomy.

The nature of this volume makes for easy reading. Some chapters could well serve as sources of reference and those on parenteral nutrition as a handbook for quick consultation. I can commend it.

D E BARNARDO