Notes and activities

Techniques and Interpretation of Gastrointestinal Tract Biopsy

The purpose of this British Council course 1-6 November 1981 is to provide an up-to-date review of practical problems and recent developments in methods of obtaining histological and cytological materials from the human gastrointestinal tract. It is intended to be of interest to the clinicians—gastroenterologists, and surgeons—who need diagnostic information and take specimens, and also to those histopathologists and cytologists who process and interpret them. There will be particular emphasis on methods of improving collaboration and present techniques, as well as their relevance to the management of patients. The course will include an exhibition of relevant equipment, and practical live demonstrations on closed-circuit colour television of new techniques such as endoscopic polypectomy and macro-biopsy. The Directors of Studies will be Dr B C Morson (consultant pathologist, St. Mark's Hospital, London) and Dr P B Cotton (consultant gastroenterologist, The Middlesex Hospital, London). The working sessions will take place at St. Mark's Hospital. Applications should be made to the British Council, 65 Davies Street, London W1.

Books

Practical Gastrointestinal Endoscopy By P B Cotton and C B Williams. (Pp. 185. Illustrated. £13.50.) Blackwell: Oxford. 1980.

During the last decade the development of fiberoptic instruments for the investigation of gastrointestinal disease has led to an explosion of diagnostic and therapeutic applications, although the pace was perhaps slower but more critical in the United Kingdom than elsewhere. Nevertheless, this new dimension to gastroenterology has meant rapid change with a great demand for endoscopic services and hence for specialist training. It is therefore surprising that it has taken so long to produce a book entirely devoted to the techniques of fiberoptic endoscopy but, despite this, *Practical Gastrointestinal Endoscopy* has been well worth waiting for.

It has been written by two widely acknowledged experts, who have distilled

their own extensive experience into a concise and easily read volume which is superbly illustrated with explicit black-and-white line diagrams. These are either inserted into the relevant text or accompany it in the broad outer margins of each page. In this way successive manoeuvres can be made crystal clear.

The book opens with a brief section on the principles, development, and instrumentation of fiberoptic endoscopy which is logically followed by a section on the endoscopy unit. Comprehensive sections are devoted to upper gastrointestinal endoscopy including diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Cannulation, sphincterotomy, and gallstone removal are discussed in the section on ERCP, which includes a number of explanatory radiographs.

The chapter on colonoscopy has the most helpful and explicit diagrams of colonic anatomy that I have seen, while that devoted to colonoscopic polypectomy includes a valuable section on the principles and practice of electrosurgery which should be read by all endoscopists.

The last two chapters concern the nursing assistant, and documentation and teaching and there are helpful appendices which include useful national and international addresses, and a list of major references in the English language.

Both the authors have been in the forefront of endoscopic teaching in three main ways: through apprenticeship; through group teaching by films, lecturing, and especially live demonstrations; and through self-teaching with models and slide-tape lectures. To this they have now added a practical manual which should be of immense value to all those who are involved in endoscopy, especially those who have to learn and to teach. It is a must for all Departments of Gastroenterology.

RICHARD H HUNT

Clinics in Gastroenterology—Gastrointestinal Hormones By W Creutzfeldt. (Pp. 503. Illustrated. £9.00.) W B Saunders: London. 1980.

The September 1980 issue of *Clinics in Gastroenterology* (vol 9:3) is a comprehensive review of gastrointestinal hormones. As the editor points out in the introduction, our understanding of the role of the gastrointestinal hormones in the control of normal bodily functions has reached a watershed and this volume takes us right up to the point of departure

into the unknown, in a very manageable and readable manner. The fundamental problems are illustrated by the three excellent opening chapters, which summarise the recent findings that the gastrointestinal hormones are present in central and peripheral neurones and nerves, as well as in endocrine and paracrine cells. In order to achieve their functional effects, the hormones are released into blood stream, extracellular fluid, synaptic cleft, and even into the luminal contents of the gut—but there's the rub—the functional role and actions of the different peptides, and their interaction with other neurotransmitters, hormones, and so on, has not been defined. Thus, although the following chapters outline the individual properties and actions of nine hormonal peptides in up-to-date detail, we cannot yet relate the effects of these chemically defined entities to normal physiological function. Some of these problems are emphasised in the excellent and provocative chapters on, for example, cholecystokinin and secretin. Four additional chapters are devoted to more general topics, such as trophic effects of the hormones and enteroinsular interactions, as well as to hormonal changes after surgery and in gastrointestinal disease.

This volume represents an essential and integral part of *Clinics in Gastroenterology*—a series which has provided necessary and useful up-to-date information for readers ranging from students to specialist gastroenterologists.

K G WORMSLEY