of reduced gall bladder function and/or development of liver disease.

G P DAVIDSON, AND T A ROBB

*Adelaide Children's Hospital,
North Adelaide, S Australia.*

References

- 1 Weizman Z, Durie PR, Kopelman HR, Vesely SM, Forstner GG. Bile acid secretion in cystic fibrosis: evidence for a defect unrelated to fat malabsorption. *Gut* 1986; **27**: 1043-8.
- 2 Robb TA, Davidson GP, Kirubakaran C. Conjugated bile acids in serum and secretions in response to cholecystokinin/secretin stimulation in children with cystic fibrosis. *Gut* 1985; **26**: 1246-56.
- 3 Davidson GP, Robb TA, Kirubakaran C. Conjugated bile acids in serum and secretions of cystic fibrosis patients. *Gastroenterology* 1984; **86**: 1957.

Books

Clinics in gastroenterology: symptoms in gastroenterology. Edited by B Gazzard, and A Theodossi. (Pp. 142; illustrated; £13.50.) London: WB Saunders, 1985.

This is a curious volume, which starts off as one thing and ends up as another. It opens, predictably and properly, with the clinical gospel according to Spiegelhalter, Knill-Jones, and de Dombal, which may be summarised by saying that if only doctors were more consistent, the outcome of their deliberations would be more predictable, and *vice versa*. Thereafter, the editors seem to have lost confidence or even interest in their chosen subject. Bennett does address the topic of oesophageal symptoms, but other contributors seem less interested in symptomatology. Drossman and Lowman, for example, write on 'Epidemiology, diagnosis, and treatment' of irritable bowel syndrome, and 'Diarrhoea as a symptom' has a similar orientation. 'Alcohol-related symptoms' appears to consider that haematological and biochemical changes are 'symptoms'. There isn't anything wrong with the chapters; it's just that you wouldn't expect to find them sold under this general title, and this materially reduces the value of this book. Editorial inconsistency seems to be a recurring problem with this series.

DAVID WINGATE

Clinics in gastroenterology 15 Edited by J A Walker-Smith. (Pp. 203; illustrated; £13.50.) London: WB Saunders, 1986.

The editor, Professor John Walker-Smith, is an Australian exiled in London. It is therefore appro-

priate that he has chosen a group of collaborators almost exclusively from Australia or London to review growing points in a now thriving specialty of paediatric gastroenterology. The selection of subjects is personal, but timely – antigen handling, infectious diarrhoea, food sensitive enteropathies, inflammatory bowel disease, intestinal motility, nutrition in cystic fibrosis, abnormalities of the biliary tree, chronic active hepatitis, congenital microvillous atrophy.

The individual chapters are of good quality, with up to date references (to early 1985). The volume can be highly recommended both to adult gastroenterologists (for interest) and to paediatric gastroenterologists (for essential information.)

ALEXANDER S MCNEISH

Clinics in gastroenterology – Portal hypertension Edited by J P Benhamou and D Lebec. (Pp. 292; illustrated; £13.50.) London: WB Saunders, 1986.

Topics were selected for this issue because of recent advances in that area, because of clinical importance or because they are not well known to the liver specialist or internist. Despite such disparate reasons a wonderful choice has been made by these two French experts, – Professor Jean-Pierre Benhamou with his critical appraisal of the clinical data, and Professor Didier Lebec with his enthusiasm particularly in the pharmacological area.

Although many of the contributors have been drawn from Europe, there are also authors from America, Canada, South America, and England. As a person long interested in portal hypertension, I have to read the whole volume and I was rarely disappointed. The editors themselves contribute a superb chapter on non-cirrhotic portal hypertension; there is also new information on varices in unusual sites, and the occurrence of pulmonary arterial hypertension has never been so extensively reviewed previously. For the practising doctor there are excellent accounts on the management of acute variceal haemorrhage and present position of pharmacological therapy. There are also specific and excellent accounts of portal hypertension in childhood, and in areas of the world where schistosomiasis is rife.

The reviewer was asked to assess the volume as to whether it was up to date, comprehensive and useful. It is all three, and I do not know of a better volume around.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Secondary prevention of colorectal cancer Edited by P Rozen and S J Winawer. (Pp. 274; illustrated; £77.70.) Basel: Karger, 1986.

Anyone involved in clinical medical research is encouraged to persist by the prospect, all too often a

distant one, that the line they are currently following may lead to some significant improvement in the prospects for their patients. For those interested in colorectal cancer screening, the ultimate hope is that such an approach will be shown to decrease significantly the persistently high mortality. The editors of this book readily admit that current research is justified only by the prospect of 'jam tomorrow', for, despite the intensive efforts of the past decade it has yet to be proven that mass screening would offer any survival benefit across a large population.

This book very adequately records the present state of the art in colorectal cancer screening. The editors have covered the field well by inviting more than 50 workers from the United States, Europe East and West, Israel and Australia to address all the important aspects. They might have confined themselves to the well trodden areas of the major trials, of compliance and of the shortcomings of present methodology; fortunately they have gone beyond this limited brief and have solicited crisp and important contributions on such aspects as ethics, jurisprudence, and the development of risk profiles for individuals. Inevitably, however, much of the book is taken up with descriptions of the experiences of the major groups in various parts of the world, both in standard risk and high risk group screening. Tighter editing would have prevented the predictable repetition of the theoretical and historical background in the introduction to each chapter. Nevertheless, this book constitutes an extremely useful and concise record of the progress made so far and the tasks still outstanding in this important area of clinical research.

JOHN M A NORTHOVER

Clinical immunology of the liver and gastrointestinal tract Edited by D R Triger. (Pp. 232; illustrated; £29.50.) Bristol: Wright, 1986.

No concise text concerning the immunology of gastrointestinal and hepatic diseases has appeared recently despite the many advances in immunological understanding. Therefore this volume is timely. It begins with a general chapter on immunological mechanisms which will prove useful to non-immunologists. It is virtually a short text book of immunology in itself and is very well written so it is perhaps churlish to be critical. However, the basic immunology of the gastrointestinal tract receives only the briefest mention which seems unfortunate in a book of this nature. The following 11 chapters are then devoted to specific disease areas. There is little

new in the immunological aspects of gastritis but Keith Taylor's chapter reviews familiar data in a fresh and stimulating manner. The chapter on coeliac disease (C F McCarthy and F M Stevens) provides a good review of genetics and of hyposplenism but the reader will not learn too much about current views on the role of immune mechanisms in the pathogenesis of the disease. Professor Isaacson gives an authoritative account of malignant lymphoma of the gastrointestinal tract although it is unfortunate that data from his own laboratory has rendered much of what is written about malignant histiocytosis out of date. The chapters on Crohn's disease (A S Pena) and ulcerative colitis (R H Ming and R G Strickland) are largely complementary although the ulcerative colitis chapter perhaps gives a more balanced overview. Liver disease is divided into three chapters: acute and chronic hepatitis, alcoholic liver disease and primary biliary cirrhosis. Of these, I particularly enjoyed the first (G J M Alexander and A L W F Eddleston) not only for its comprehensiveness but for its firm focus on pathogenetic mechanisms. Strangely, this chapter is not referenced but provides a selective bibliography. The book is made complete by excellent contributions on immunodeficiency (A D B Webster) and on paediatric disorders (E G Seidman and W A Walker).

The book is well produced, well illustrated and is good value at £29.50. It can be recommended for anyone who wishes to get an update on immunopathogenesis of gastrointestinal and hepatic disorders.

D P JEWELL

News

BSG Research Award 1987

A three page summary of personal research work is invited by The British Society of Gastroenterology for the 1987 Research Medal. A bibliography may also be submitted if desired. The Award consists of a medal and £100 prize. The recipient of the Award will be aged 40 years or less when delivering the lecture during the Autumn Meeting of the Society in September 1987. All (or a substantial part) of the work must have been performed in the UK or Eire. Applications (*six* copies) should be made to: The Honorary Secretary, BSG, 3 St. Andrew's Place, London NW1 4LB, by 1 May 1987.