ASCII character. The logical basis of the argument is not clear, and the worked examples add little to the argument, and do not seem to simplify the calculation. In comparison with Siegel's classic on *Non-parametric statistics*, which uses worked examples to explain the logic of the argument (or for that matter other statistical classics, such as Snedocor and Tukey) this book is neither particularly convincing nor very helpful; the worked examples are no more than the substitution of numbers for symbols in the various equations.

A computer software disk* supplied to me did not greatly improve matters; while it allows one to calculate confidence intervals either from data given in the book or from personal data, it does not allow the data to be saved to or transferred from another source, and it is only a device for calculation, not explanation. In extenuation, I should point that this was a test disk and possibly not identical with the version to be published.

If the use of confidence intervals diminishes erroneous inferences from data then, presumably, the literature is replete with such errors. But is it? There is no clear evidence on this point put forward by the authors. Have reviewers in the past allowed the publication of ambiguous statistics and will this henceforth cease. Again, there is no clear message. Am I an old fogey who simply resents the introduction of new methods? Perhaps.

Nevertheless, if the method had not been already imposed by editorial edict, I wonder whether this book would have won many converts. I doubt it.

DAVID WINGATE

*The CIA disk which accompanies the book is available at a full price of £65 in the 5" or 3.5" format.

Clinical gastroenterology. Vol 2 No 2. Adverse drug reactions in the differential diagnosis of GI and liver diseases. Edited by J Bircher. (Pp. 269; illustrated; price not stated) London: Baillière Tindall, 1988.

Injury caused by drugs replaced syphilis long ago as the most versatile and important mimic of disease. The diagnosis can be made only after the possibility has been entertained, and too many times it has not. The physician must of course take an adequate treatment history, but will then often have to consult a reference book to check whether a drug the patient has had is known to cause the problem presented. This is such a book for gastroenterologists, edited by a clinical pharmacologist but written mostly by experienced clinicians and pathologists with their heart in gut and liver.

The editor briefly summarises the criteria for diagnosing an adverse drug reaction, and then different drug induced problems are dealt with in turn: oesophageal lesions; non-specific abdominal symptoms; pancreatitis; GI bleeding; malabsorption; diarrhoea and constipation; acute and chronic hepatitis; cholestasis; fatty change; granulomatous hepatitis; hepatic vascular lesions; liver tumours. All these chapters compactly describe the features which characterise these diseases and symptoms when they are caused by various drugs, and distinguish what is well established from what is less certain. Most sketch out what is known about the pathogenesis. The bibliography is enormous, up to 1987, and readers will be pleased to find their work quoted. Although this is primarily a reference book some chapters are also interesting to read, for instance those on non-specific symptoms, and on fatty change.

I hope that every gastroenterology unit will not only use this book, but also keep a log of its use. That could lead to significant improvement in the reporting of suspected adverse reactions to the Committee on Safety of Medicines or its counterparts.

ANDREW HERXHEIMER

Clinical gastroenterology. Edited by L A Turnberg. (Pp. 537; illustrated; £39.50.) Blackwell, Oxford: 1989.

In his preface, the editor outlines the aim of the book: to provide an assessment of the management options in terms of current optimal therapy. Some of the chapters provide guidance about the interpretation and treatment of symptoms and symptom complexes, including haemorrhage from the upper and lower alimentary tract; functional dyspepsia; constipation and chronic diarrhoea; traveller's diarrhoea; malabsorption and jaundice. Other chapters review the management of specific diseases such as oesophageal disorders; peptic ulceration; diseases of the gall bladder; ulcerative colitis; Crohn's disease; pancreatitis; pancreatic cancer; viral hepatitis; chronic liver disease; and the problems of immunocompromised individuals. In addition, there are chapters on the management of the sequelae of disease processes (such as fistulae) and also of the consequences of operative interference with the viscera of the alimentary tract. Further chapters outline the interpretation of abnormal liver function tests; the value of screening for alimentary cancers; and the use of enteral and parenteral nutrition.

The book achieves its objectives and can therefore be regarded as a success. There are, of course, some omissions and one can differ from some of the views and recommendations. For example, starting at the beginning, the section on oesophageal diseases does not mention the importance of avoiding food and