

Problems in Liver Diseases Edited by Charles S. Davidson. (Pp. 321. Figures. \$35.60. DM 98). Stratton Intercontinental. 1979.

The title of this book is aptly chosen; it promises to define specific problems encountered in the management of patients with liver disease, to present the current state of the art in each problem situation, and to offer guidelines for rational therapy based on scientific evidence. This excellent book does all this and far more, for the reader is soon captivated by the enthusiastic and scholarly approach of each distinguished author and finds himself intrigued by the rapid advances of the past three decades, yet bewildered by the potential for further research.

Thirty-one essays cover a wide range of topics: interpretation of the commonly measured indices of hepatic dysfunction; quantitative assessment of each aspect of hepatic functions; pathophysiology and management of the four major complications of cirrhosis; identification and treatment of haemochromatosis, alcoholic hepatitis, Reye's syndrome, and liver disease in pregnancy; succinct statements of modern knowledge on hepatocellular carcinoma, halothane hepatitis, Wilson's disease, antiviral agents in chronic hepatitis B and immunology of primary biliary cirrhosis; stimulating discussions on the use of animal models of liver disease and the hepatic removal of circulating glycoproteins.

This book was not intended to provide an all-embracing review of the literature or a complete education on diseases of the liver. Only key references are cited. It is a book which will appeal not only to hepatologists but to gastroenterologists, general physicians, postgraduate students, and research workers seeking a terse statement of modern knowledge in a rapidly advancing field.

J. M. BRAGANZA

Radiological Atlas of Biliary and Pancreatic Disease By H. Baddeley, D. J. Nolan, and P. R. Salmon. (Pp. 218. Illustrated. £18.) HM & M Publishers: Aylesbury, Bucks. 1978.

The investigation of biliary tract and pancreatic disorders has advanced enormously in the last 10 years with the advent of endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) and percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography (PTC). Experience with these techniques has grown recently so that there are now several

radiological atlases of the normal anatomy and appearances in the diseased state. The authors, two radiologists and one endoscopist, are authorities on the subject. Their atlas contains a wide-ranging collection of radiographs of biliary and pancreatic disease, drawn mainly from their own work but also relying on illustrations from colleagues and the literature to fill important gaps. Nine chapters are devoted to the biliary tree and three to the pancreas with two sketchy introductory chapters on the clinical and radiological aspects of the subject. Some guidance is given in each section for choosing the appropriate radiological investigation for a given disorder but there is greater emphasis on the structural abnormality to be found than on the technique used to show it. Apart from ERCP and PTC the illustrations include barium radiology, other forms of cholangiography, arteriography but only four computerised tomograms. ERCP is favoured here over PTC for the more complex biliary tract disorders, a view that would not meet with widespread approval. There are several surprisingly poor reproductions of presumably good original radiographs, with lack of distinction between the hazy grey background and pale contrast or air-filled ducts. Labelling of the plates is often scanty, which is regrettable where the anatomy is confusing or the picture unclear. Most of the radiological diagnoses of pancreatic disease are unsubstantiated by case reports and, as correlations are still being established in the subject, it would have been reassuring to have more confirmation from surgery, necropsy, or other techniques. Despite these criticisms, this small and relatively inexpensive atlas can be recommended as a personal copy to gastroenterologists and radiologists alike, for it is compact and inexpensive compared with other works on the subject and the comprehensive nature of the selection of illustrations amply compensates for the few poorly reproduced or labelled ones.

A. REUBEN

Pancreatitis By Peter A. Banks. (Topics in Gastroenterology Series). (Pp. 236. Illustrated. £14.17.) Plenum Medical Book Company: New York and London. 1979.

This is the first volume of a new publishing venture on Topics in Gastroenterology. In his Foreword the Senior Editor, Dr Howard M. Spiro, indicates that the series is aimed at the intelligent clinician. Written by Dr Banks of Boston, well known in

this country for his papers on the pancreas in clinical and experimental journals, the monograph provides an impressive account of his personal views and practice particularly in the management of pancreatitis. The volume is divided into two main sections: acute pancreatitis of some 173 pages and chronic pancreatitis of some 53 pages. This discrepancy in the size of the sections creates some imbalance, though it should be stated that there is an overlap in considering some of the diagnostic tests of pancreatitis which leads to a blurring of the distinction of an episode of early chronic pancreatitis from acute pancreatitis.

The physiological principles underlying pancreatitis are outlined, and discussed more fully in the chapters on the basic treatment of acute pancreatitis, both medical and surgical, as are the management of recurrent pancreatitis, protracted acute pancreatitis, and their complications, which make rewarding reading. The need for brevity leads on occasions to curtailed argument, even on occasions to the listing of various hypotheses without choice or criticism, which may prove difficult for the uninitiated to understand and absorb. This defect is mitigated by a bibliography of the current literature, largely American though few references are made to the not inconsiderable European contributions to the understanding of pancreatitis. Some familiarity and experience with pancreatitis is an essential for the full value of the book to be appreciated. One wonders how far in the monograph the constraints of brevity have added to the imbalance. To give an example, consideration of the amylase creatinine ratio comprises almost four pages, whereas ultrasonography (apart from the excellent illustrations) less than one page of text. These are minor criticisms; the book is of a handy size and will appeal to gastroenterologists who presumably are not only intelligent but also experienced.

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Books received

Unexpected Complications in Medical Care (Skandia International Symposia) Edited by H. Boström and N. Ljungstedt. (Pp. 301. Sw. Kr. 125). Almqvist and Wiksell: Stockholm.

Clinical Aspects of Albumin Edited by S. H. Yap, C. L. H. Majoor, and J. H. M. van Tongaren. (Pp. 203. Illustrated. Price not quoted). Martinus Nijhoff Medical Division. 1978.