

one swallow to another in the same individual. Although there is a similar variation in manometrically recorded swallow wave profiles, it is our practice to record at least 10 swallows in each third of the oesophagus. Thus a 'freak' swallow is unlikely to affect the interpretation of manometry.

To us, RT gives no additional information to what can be gleaned from a careful review of a recorded barium swallow, a test which would be done in any case in most patients presenting to us with dysphagia. Indeed, Lorber and Shay<sup>1</sup> were using liquid barium transit measurement as long ago as 1955 in the assessment of dysphagia. To date, the published and presented work on RT has failed to convince us that it is a test which can justifiably claim its place alongside barium studies, endoscopy, oesophageal manometry, and 24 hour pH measurement, as clinically useful tests of oesophageal function.

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#### Collagenous colitis and coeliac disease

SIR,—Hamilton *et al* recently described two patients with coeliac disease and collagenous colitis (*Gut* 1986; **27**: 1394). They failed to find any previous incidence of this association. We have also encountered a similar case, resulting from our study of rectal biopsies in coeliacs.<sup>1</sup>

A 29 year old woman presented with a six week history of watery diarrhoea and 1 stone (6.3 kg) weight loss. At sigmoidoscopy an erythematous inflamed mucosa was seen and histopathology showed moderate inflammatory cell infiltration with gross thickening (20 µm) of the basement membrane in the

superficial lamina propria. This collagenous band was demonstrated with haematoxylin and eosin, and reticulin stains. A jejunal biopsy was then done and it showed subtotal villous atrophy with no evidence of subepithelial collagen. The Hb was 15.5 g%, folate 177 ng/ml, albumin 28 g/l and HLA typing was B8. The patient started a gluten free diet and the jejunal mucosa recovered and the diarrhoea settled.

This woman illustrates several interesting features: (1) Collagenous colitis usually occurs in middle aged or elderly women, whereas this patient was 29 years. (2) This is the third report in the literature of this association suggesting that there may be many more and a possible related aetiology. (3) The diarrhoea settled soon after starting a gluten free diet and this has not been previously documented. (4) This patient had not been on a gluten free diet before the diagnosis of collagenous colitis, unlike those reported by Hamilton *et al*.

We recommend that all coeliacs who develop diarrhoea after strict adherence to a gluten free diet, should have a rectal biopsy.

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## Books

**Recent advances in hepatology. Vol. 2.** Edited by Howard C Thomas and E Anthony Jones. (Pp. 193; illustrated; £38.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

The aim behind this particular series of update volumes is to cater for the practising physician and surgeon, in particular to help him with the research literature by providing a well balanced analysis by experts in those particular areas who have continued to work in clinical medicine. The subjects selected range over a very wide area indeed. They include mechanisms of hepatocellular degeneration and death, bilirubin metabolism, hepatitis B and the delta virus, with subsequent chapters on management including ascites, biliary obstruction, liver failure and transplantation. The last two particularly were disappointing, the transplantation chapter being concerned only with a particular review by the author of results from eight centres up to 1984, and there has of course been a tremendous development of the procedure since that

time. The more basic chapters are in general of a high standard, but one wonders how such disparate topics will be of interest to the practising doctor in the fields of gastroenterology/hepatology. The editing in parts is poor with spelling mistakes and misreferences; and there are many other reviews of some of these topics, for instance delta hepatitis. One can only confess to a slight disappointment with the volume.

ROGER WILLIAMS

**Reoperative surgery of the abdomen** Edited by Donald E Fry. (Pp. 431; illustrated; \$83.50.) New York: Marcel Dekker, 1986.

There are many books dealing with first operations, but very few that concentrate on reoperation. This omission is becoming increasingly important as more patients do well after operation, live for many years and present again with further problems which may or may not be related to the first. For example, intraperitoneal adhesions, rather than strangulated herniae, are now the commonest cause of intestinal obstruction in the USA.

This book is, therefore, both timely and informative. It is very compact and runs to over 400 pages. Each chapter is followed by key references and the discussion is illustrated by graphs and conventional radiographs, as well as CAT scans. The drawings of operations are clear but some are rather 'heavy' and unrefined. Chapters on second look operation for cancer and reoperation for portal hypertension are particularly helpful and are written from experience rather than theory. There is a welcome constructive criticism of established practices: for example, the evidence for the time honoured policy of interval appendicectomy, several weeks after an appendix mass has resolved, is found to be quite thin.

Unfortunately, the first three chapters in particular, are spoiled by poor English and include some bad examples of 'medspeak'.

In summary, this is a book full of valuable advice for the more experienced surgeon who will be faced with these problems of reoperation increasingly as the years go by.

A G JOHNSON

**Nuclear gastroenterology** Edited by P J A Robinson. (Pp. 180; illustrated; £35.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

This book aims to review the principles, technical details, and application of newer radionuclide procedures for alimentary tract and hepatobiliary investigation in a manner suitable for first line reference by physicians, surgeons, and radiologists with an interest in gastroenterology. A tall order, perhaps, but it is remarkably successful in meeting these objectives. How many gastroenterologists are uneasy about their use (or non-use) of radionuclide

tests for measurement of oesophageal transit, gastric emptying or duodenogastric reflux, the assessment of inflammatory disease within the abdomen, gastrointestinal bleeding or liver/gall bladder imaging? Most, I imagine, would welcome up to date information about the performance and value of such investigations and would wish to relate such information to their own clinical practice.

Ten British authors have contributed to the book under Dr Robinson's editorial guidance and, in 11 chapters, cover the topics indicated above and a few more besides. Some are outstandingly informative, well balanced and fully referenced reviews, and these seem to me to be the most valuable. Chapters on the assessment of the small intestine and on scintigraphy in paediatrics have been written in a slightly different style without detailed referencing and are less useful in consequence. The book is liberally illustrated and Churchill Livingstone's usual high standards of production are maintained. In the context of current book prices, £35 for this one seems very fair.

Should it be recommended in the familiar cliche terms for every postgraduate library or for every gastroenterologist's bookshelf? Such advice from reviewers seldom makes me rush out to the bookshop and I believe my lack of response is often shared by others. *Nuclear gastroenterology*, however, may be commended to any gastroenterologist who is reappraising the nuclear medicine tests undertaken on his own patients, or who is considering the introduction of new procedures to his own institution. This book will give him most of the information and expert opinion he needs and I know of no other single source from which it can be obtained.

R C HEADING

**Bile pigments and jaundice. Molecular, metabolic, and medical aspects** Edited by J D Ostrow. (Pp. 724; illustrated; \$119.50.) New York and Basel: Marcel Dekker, 1986.

This is an authoritative comprehensive manuscript: a worthy successor to Dr With's classics on the same topics in 1954 and 1968. Thirty five authors of international repute cover topics ranging from molecular and physical chemistry of bile pigments through their normal synthesis, transport and metabolism in man and other vertebrates and concluding with the consideration of the light-harvesting, phycobiliproteins of algae and the photomorphogenic phytochromes which regulate seed germination and flowering in higher plants. In between, all aspects of the measurement of bilirubin, its intestinal and renal transport and specific metabolic abnormalities of bile metabolism are considered in depth, together with fetal and neonatal handicaps in bilirubin metabolism and the production of bile pigment stones. It is disappointing



## Recent advances in hepatology. Vol. 2

Roger Williams

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