

Gut

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more important than the absolute numerical values of the proliferation indices.

PCNA develops in various stages of the cell cycle – that is, late G₁, S, G₂, and M phase – and PCNA positive cells exhibit a spectrum of staining intensities. To match BrdU positive cells, only the strongly stained nuclei, which were assumed to be in S phase, were counted in the PCNA assay. Our study did not claim to identify the cell cycle components labelled by the PCNA assay.

A paired statistical analysis to test whether the mean difference between an individual proliferation index measured by PCNA and a proliferation index measured by BrdU in the same subject is significantly different from zero, resulted in a mean difference of 0.001 with $p=0.85$. The mean difference of the proliferation index in crypt compartments was also not significantly different from zero when using paired statistics.

The intention of the study was to find a simple and reliable biomarker for measurement of the proliferation state in colonic biopsy specimens applicable in a clinical setting – that is, a method that does not require incubation of viable tissue. Possibly, PCNA is not the best candidate for this undertaking. Recent results in our laboratory showed that a Ki67 antibody (MIB1), which can be applied to paraffin sections¹ yields a staining quality comparable with that obtained by BrdU immunohistochemistry. This new method leads to easily and objectively interpretable results. There is increasing reservation, however, as to whether the fraction of the replicating cell population labelled by Ki67 is equivalent to the growth fraction.^{2,3} This would mean that Ki67 positivity also does not represent a marker of a well defined cell cycle component.

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1 Gerdes J, Becker MHG, Key G, Cattoretti G. Immunohistological detection of tumour growth fraction (Ki-67 antigen) in formalin-fixed and routinely processed tissue. *J Pathol* 1992; **168**: 85–7.

2 Haldane JS, Scott RJ, Wright NA. Does the use of Ki67 allow the determination of tumour growth fraction? *J Pathol* 1990; **160**: 155.

3 Scott RJ, Hall PA, Haldane JS, van Noorden S, Price Y, Lane DP, Wright NA. A comparison of immunohistochemical markers of cell proliferation with experimentally determined growth fraction. *J Pathol* 1991; **165**: 173–8.

NOTES

British Digestive Foundation travel grants

The Hunt Memorial Fund and the Hurst Centenary Fund provide grants for travel to research workers in gastroenterology who wish, specifically, to further their own work by discussion with others, or by learning new techniques. Grants will not be given simply to permit attendance at medical meetings.

A letter of application (12 copies) with sufficient detail to permit a committee to weigh its merits, and with an assessment of cost involved, should be sent to the British Digestive Foundation, 3 St Andrews Place, London NW1 4LB. The closing date is 1 June 1994.

Liver disease

The XIXth International Update on Liver Disease will be held at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, London on 14–16 July 1994. Further information from: Professor Neil McIntyre, University Department of Medicine, Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG. Tel: 071 794 0500 ext 3969; fax: 071 794 4688.

Gastroenterology and endoscopy

The 2nd Munich Postgraduate Course on Gastroenterology and Endoscopy will be held on 8–10 September 1994 in Munich, Germany. Further information from: Dr T

Rösch (Congress Secretary), B Fischer, Department of Internal Medicine II, Klinikum rechts der Isar, Technical University of Munich, Ismaninger Str 22, 81675 Munich, Germany. Tel: 089 4140 2263; fax: 089 4180 5172.

Clinical nutrition

The Leeds course in Clinical Nutrition will be held on 6–9 September 1994. Further details from: Mrs Hilary L Thackray, Department of Continuing Professional Education, Continuing Education Building, Springfield Mount, Leeds LS2 9NG. Tel: 0532 333233; fax: 0532 333240.

Sphincter of Oddi manometry

The Pancreaticobiliary Center of the Medical College of Wisconsin is holding a three day course from 21–23 September 1994 on sphincter of Oddi manometry. Further information from: Walter Hogan and Reza Shaker, Gastroenterology Division, Medical College of Wisconsin, Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital, 9200 W Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226, USA. Tel: 414 384 2000, ext 6943; fax: 414 384 2052.

Gall stones: causes and management

The 2nd International Conference on Gall Stones: Causes and Management will be held in Tel Aviv, Israel on 19–22 March 1995. Further information from: Gall Stone Conference Secretariat, Peltours-Te'um Congress Organisers, POB 8388, Jerusalem 91082, Israel. Tel: 972 2 617402; fax: 972 2 637572.

Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association

The Hellenic Chapter of the International Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association organises the European IHPBA Congress in Athens on 25–28 May 1995. Further information from: Congress Secretariat, Int'l congress consultants, Mrs F Cotsis, 4 Filellinon st, GR-105 57 Athens, Greece. Tel: 301 3230380-381, 3237536-550; fax: 301 3245049.

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Gut publishes original papers, short rapid communications, leading articles, and reviews concerned with all aspects of the scientific basis of diseases of the alimentary tract, liver, and pancreas. Case reports will only be accepted if of exceptional merit. Letters related to articles published in *Gut* or with topics of general professional interest are welcomed. Authors should include the names and addresses of four experts whom the authors consider suitable to peer review their work.

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factors, see *The SI for Health Professions* (WHO, 1977). **NB: Such conversion is the responsibility of the author.**

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