Notes and activities

Second International LCAT Symposium

This symposium will be held at the Royal Free Hospital, London, from 9-11 May 1978. It will be opened by Professor Egil Gjone, Oslo, with a lecture entitled 'Lecithin: cholesterol acyltransferase (LCAT)—a decennial review' and will be followed by a series of oral communications. It is intended that the scope of the meeting should cover all aspects of LCAT and submission of abstracts of communications is now invited. Further details should be obtained from the organisers: Dr J. S. Owen and Dr R. C. Day, Academic Department of Medicine, Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG, UK.

Royal Free: Hepatic Diseases Updated

'Hepatic Diseases Updated' (Third Annual International Postgraduate Course) will be held at the Royal Free Hospital, London, 15-17 June 1978. Topics will include alcoholic liver injury, bilirubin metabolism, cholangiography, drug toxicity, acute and chronic hepatitis. Speakers will include H. Dowling (London), W. C. Maddrey (Johns Hopkins), F. Schaffner (New York), R. Zeppa (Miami), A. J. Zuckerman (London), and staff of the Royal Free Hospital. Details from Professor Sheila Sherlock, Director, Medical Unit, Royal Free Hospital, London, NW3 2QG.

BSDE Spring Meeting: Change of Plan

The Spring Meeting of the British Society for Digestive Endoscopy will not now be held at the Royal Free Hospital, London, on 20 and 21 April as previously announced but at the University of Bristol on 13 and 14 April with Dr Paul Brown as local secretary.

Société Belge de Gastro-entérologie

The Société Belge de Gastro-entérologie will celebrate its 50th anniversary with an international congress to be held from 16-18 March in Brussels. The speakers will include S. R. Bloom, J. J. Misiewicz, D. Johnston, C. C. Booth, R. Williams, and L. Kreel. Details may be obtained from Dr. A. Delcourt, Rue P. E. Janson 10, 1050 Bruxelles.

Books

Crohn's Disease By B. Brooke, D. Cave, J. Gurry, and D. King. (Pp. 113; illustrated; £9.75.) Macmillan Press: London and Basingstoke. 1977.

The incidence of Crohn's disease is rising and this book is written to alert the

medical profession to the implications of the increasing incidence, and perhaps virulence, of the disorder and to give helpful guidance in diagnosis and management.

The clinical sections of this book are its main strength, based as they are on enormous experience and an analysis of a series of 112 patients treated over a recent 12-year period. The text bears the imprint of the senior author's flair for the telling phrase. In the past he has introduced us to 'aphthoid ulcers' and 'mucosal islands'; now we are jolted by the mental picture of 'acute disintegrative colitis'. Advice on coping with the problems of Crohn's disease is straightforward and direct, especially the comments on operative procedures. Useful diagnostic points are mentioned, such as the distinction between the slowly developing obstruction due to stenosis and the sudden acute obstruction due to an adhesion from previous surgery.

The sections on aetiology and medical treatment naturally reflect the research interests of the authors. Thus, the recent work on a transmissible agent is thoroughly discussed, whereas the possibility of a defect in the immunological defence mechanisms is dealt with in one paragraph. Similarly, a chapter is devoted to treatment with azathioprine, whereas other drugs and nutritional problems are discussed very briefly.

This short book is written in a vivid direct style. Some excellent colour plates are included but the reproduction of many of the radiographs is of disappointing quality. The extensive bibliography includes references up to 1976. Gastroenterologists can learn much from the fund of experience described here but perhaps this readable monograph will be of the greatest help to non-specialists who wish to bring themselves up to date and gain help with particular clinical problems.

J. E. LENNARD-JONES

Diagnosis of Cholecystoses By J. H. J. Ruijs and S. G. Th. Hulst. (Pp. 128; illustrated; Dfl 55.) Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague, 1977.

This 128-page book is a radiological survey of the cholecystoses with clinical aspects. It is largely an atlas of contrast cholecystograms showing the features of cholecystoses. The line drawings, on clear plastic overlays, satisfactorily explain the abnormalities of the rather grainy radiographs. The authors are a radiologist and an internist from the University of Utrecht. They provide an exhaustive classi-

fication of the hyperplastic and degenerative group of diseases known as the cholecystoses. Included are the common cholesteroses and the adenomyomatoses. The pathology and radiology of these differing conditions is accurately described. The authors stress the value of functional cholecystography. Hypercontraction of the gallbladder and increase in the thickness of a septum or band following the administration of intravenous CCK are rightly stressed as useful diagnostic signs of adenomyomatosis. The incidence of associated calculi in these diseases is not stated, even though there are careful follow-ups on all patients, including operative specimens. The authors are cautious in advising surgery even in symptomatic patients as only 64% are relieved of symptoms. Fifteen-year follow-ups have shown no higher incidence of carcinoma of the gallbladder in these patients; therefore medical treatment is preferred unless symptoms become severe. The radiographs shown are far too numerous, many showing similar conditions. Line and pathological drawings are satisfactory. The text is brief and the English impeccable, apart from the misuse of the word 'spasmodics' when an antispasmodic is being recommended. Undoubtedly, this volume does add a little further knowledge on this mixed bag of diseases.

R. DICK

Common Gastroenterological Problems By R. H. Salter. (Pp 100, £2.50) John Wright: Bristol.

This is a small book of 100 pages bringing together a series of articles on common gastroenterological problems, some of the sections having previously been published under the same title in *The Practitioner*. It is a concise, up-to-date statement and should be useful to non-specialist clinicians, senior medical students, and paramedical staff.

Simple Relaxation. The Physiological Method for Easing Tension By Laura Mitchell. (£1.95). John Murray: London. The importance of nervous tension in functional alimentary disorders is well appreciated, and one welcomes any assistance in getting patients to become more relaxed. This sensibly written book sets out a simple programme for muscular relaxation, which is pleasantly easy and uncomplicated and could prove of real help for individuals who have developed the habit of being over-tense and keyed up.