Notes and activities

British Society of Gastroenterology Research Funds

Applications are invited for financial support for research, education and travel or equipment from the Society's research funds. For application forms and further information concerning specific guidelines, please contact the Honorary Secretary, University College Hospital, The Rayne Institute, 5 University Street, London, WC1E 6JJ. Closing dates for applications: 1 February and 1 August.

Société Nationale Française de Gastro-Entérologie: Troisièmes Journées Franco-phones D'Hépto-Gastro-Entérologie

This meeting will be held at Lyon from 13 to 16 March 1979. Details from S. Erlinger, Secrétaire des Séances, Hôpital Beaujon, 100, Bd du Général Leclerc, 92118 Clichy Cedex, France.

University of Birmingham Medical School, Clinical Immunology Course

This course will be held from 30 March to 6 April 1979. Details from Mr P. G. Bevan, Director, Board of Graduate Clinical Studies, The Medical School, Birmingham B15 9TJ.

Books

Cholangiography and Pancreatography

By Masao Ohto, Takanori Ono, Yukihiro Tsuchiya, and Hiromitsu Saisho. (Pp. 314; Illustrated; 132 Dutch Guilders). Kugler Medical Publications: Amsterdam. 1978. This book will be a source of joy to radiologists, gastroenterologists, and surgeons interested in the biliary tract and pancreas. Approximately one half is devoted to the historical development, technical procedures, problems, and results of three major techniques (percutaneous transhepatic cholangiography, hypotonic duodenography, and endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography). Descriptions of variation in anatomy and disease are highly detailed, but clear and immaculately illustrated with radiographs and line diagrams. This is followed by a major review of the role of these techniques in different clinical situations, and includes much information about the diseases which affect

these organs. Inevitably there is a slant towards Japanese problems, with greater emphasis on biliary than pancreatic disease. Equally, since the book originates from Chiba University, it is scarcely surprising that the authors have had a very good experience of PTC; however the relative merits of this technique and ERCP in the diagnosis of jaundice are clearly discussed, as are their therapeutic developments—for example, PTC drainage and endoscopic sphincterotomy. The final section consists of an atlas of biliary and pancreatic radiology; many cases are also illustrated with photographs of operative specimens and histopathology.

The standard of production and illustration is very high; there are more than 500 references. Anyone with a clinical interest in biliary and pancreatic disease needs access to this book; it will become a classic.

P. B. COTTON

Histamine: Its Role in Physiological and Pathological Processes

By Michael A. Beaven. (Pp. 114. Illustrated. US \$22.75; DM 43.) Karger: Basle.

This is a small monograph on histamine which covers a remarkably wide field. Readers of this journal will be particularly interested in the historical section, which recalls clearly the germinal contributions of Dale and his colleagues, but includes references up to 1975: the section entitled 'The histamine receptors: studies with H1 and H2 receptor antagonists and agonists'; and a chapter on the role of histamine in gastric secretion, which summarises the evidence that histamine does indeed play a role in gastric secretion and includes references to articles published in 1978. Since there is also a chapter on the methods of measurement of histamine, including the recent contributions of Lorenz and of Beaven himself, gastroenterologists working in the field of histamine will, I believe, have to find the price of this book—which, quoted as \$22.75, is not inconsiderable. The remaining chapters, devoted to the role of histamine in disease and in immunology, ensure that the book is attractive to a very much wider audience than gastroenterologists.

MICHAEL HOBSLEY

Carcinoma of the Oesophagus Edited by W. Silber. (Pp. 474. Illustrated. £21.00.) A. A. Balkema: Rotterdam. 1978. The wide geographic variation in incidence

is one of the interests of oesophageal carcinoma; most other attributes of these highly malignant growths are gloomy. One area of high incidence is South Africa, particularly among Blacks in rural Transkei, so it is understandable that a conference on oesophageal carcinoma should have been held in South Africa in January 1977 under the auspices of its Medical Research Council. This book is the unabridged proceedings of that conference.

The epidemiology is the best section, with good contributions particularly from Keen of South Africa and Gillis of Scotland. The chapters on aetiology are more speculative than factual. Screening is discussed interestingly, though, like all screening procedures, it could not be justified save in populations with an exceptionally high incidence. Cytology is emphasised as an accurate diagnostic technique.

Therapy takes up about half the book, with large series reported by numerous surgeons, as well as contributions from radio- and chemotherapists. It was encouraging to see some reports of randomised trials of different treatment schedules (though the ethics of such an approach were questioned by one participant—a surgeon). Where overall results are so poor, it seems essential to be more critical in the evaluation of various treatments. The appalling mortality of *operative* intubation of malignant strictures is once more confirmed, and endoscopic techniques of intubation are described by Proctor and Didcott (of South Africa).

Every contribution and all the discussion appear to be reproduced completely and colloquially. Liberal use of a blue pencil would have substantially diminished the size with a gain in quality. As it is, £21.00 is a high price for a compendium of studies, the best of which have been published elsewhere. An index would have helped.

J. R. BENNETT

Books received:

Manual of Clinical Problems in Internal Medicine (Annotated with Key References) Second Edition By Jerry L. Spivak and H. Verdain Barnes. (Pp. 513. \$10.95.) Published by Little, Brown: Boston. 1978.

Allergy in Children By J. A. Kuzemko. (Pp. 144. Illustrated. £6.00.) Pitman Medical: Tunbridge Wells. 1978.