Clinical gastroenterology: a problem-oriented approach Edited by Sidney Cohen. (Pp. 464; £22.25.) Chichester: John Wiley, 1983.

This North American book, predominantly written by authors from Pennsylvania, covers the full range of gastrointestinal disorders including liver and pancreatic disease, and particular benefit is claimed from a problem orientated approach which is designed to appeal to the practising physician.

The virtues are apparent in many of the flow diagrams which lead clearly from one stage of management to the next. There are, however, all-too-familiar difficulties in ensuring uniformity of approach by multiple authors. Thus, space given to the outdated d xylose test is almost double that allowed to ultrasonography in the jaundiced patient, where for instance the familiar catch of non-dilated ducts behind recent obstruction by stones, an important problem, is not mentioned. Elsewhere malabsorption is discussed almost entirely in terms of diarrhoea; macrocytic anaemia is barely discussed; endoscopic sclerotherapy seems undervalued; the failure of H₂ antagonist therapy to alter the ultimate behaviour of ulcer disease is not mentioned; and the risks which hepatitis antigen carriers present are not mentioned.

The language could also be crisper (what does 'haemoglobin may reflect blood loss or plasma loss and is thereby variable' mean? Surely one problem is that acute blood loss does not change the haemoglobin) or clearer; what is aggressive medical therapy for bleeding diverticulosis?

The supporting references largely come from United States journals in the period 1978–80; this geographical selectivity is understandable and familiar, but irritating when it ignores or almost ignores the very great clinical contribution made by non-US gastroenterologists.

I am left with the feeling that the editor and authors have failed to capitalise on a good idea.

M J S LANGMAN

Atlas of colorectal tumours By P Hermanek and K Karrer (Translated by Dr L H Sobin). (Pp. 148; illustrated; £35.00.) Butterworth, London: 1983. PVG Pharmazeutische Verlagsgesellschaft, subtitled to Butterworth Scientific Ltd, produce a series of clinical and pathological atlases specialising in three dimension diagrams to illustrate pathology and in this case epidemiology. In this atlas of colorectal tumours, Dr Sobin has translated the work of Professors Hermanek and Karrer, pathologist and epidemiologist respectively. It is 148 pages of beautiful photomicrographs, anatomical

reconstructions and histograms, an almanac on colorectal neoplasms. Double page spreads are given over to artists drawings of colonic polypoid mucosa, immaculate macro-photographs and colourful block diagrams of the facts about tumour spread, prognosis, screening programmes etc. The majority of the data come from the Erlangen Registry of Colo-Rectal Polyps and Cancer but other big series are quoted. As well as epidemiological data there are also short sections on radiology and the surgical approaches to the various manifestations of colorectal malignancy, again pictorially perfect.

Having read and appreciated the format of the book I began to wonder about its audience. For me, a pathologist, I will find the histograms of survival data a useful reference base, the pathology least useful. I imagine physicians and surgeons may find the reverse and the book will provide for them a pleasant way of appreciating pathology. Overall the book is an enjoyable luxury for one's library.

A B PRICE

Surgery III – gastroenterological surgery Edited by M Irving and R W Bert Jr. (Pp. 384; illustrated; £27.00.) London: Butterworths, 1983.

This text represents a valuable addition to the surgical literature covering a total of 15 topics ranging from oesophageal motility problems through the management of inflammatory bowel disease and jaundice to discussing alternatives in the management of rectal cancer and complications after gastrointestinal surgery.

The format involves presentation of the detailed thoughts of acknowledged experts on various subjects which are in addition subjected to generally detailed and critical assessment by their peers. It seems to have been editorial policy to interfere little in the various styles of each chapter and although this is generally refreshing, the reader may be irritated by the use of the American language in otherwise English text.

Of the 15 topics covered some have been reviewed historically and in great detail – for example, current surgical management of duodenal ulcer – in which T V Taylor brings us right up to date with his seromyotomy, William Silen responds in the commentary with a broader appraisal. The investigation and management of gastrointestinal bleeding is reviewed in critical detail, however, one or two of the other topics – for example, portal hypertension – are presented as a rather laboured personal experience and it is the commentary (by R Shields) that is of the greater value. In general, however, the