Notes and activities

2nd International Symposium on Gastro-duodenal Pathophysiology and Diseases

This symposium, sponsored by the Italian Society of Gastroenterology, like the first one in 1973 was held on 11 and 12 March 1977 in the magnificent conference facilities of the Aula Magna Istituto Nuove Patologie of the Policlinico S. Orsola in Bologna, with the assistance of ISF Italseber e Icar Leon. Professors G. Labo and L. Barbara, and Drs M. Miglioli and R. Corinaldesi, of the University of Bologna, were the prime instigators and organisers of a memorable meeting with its efficient organisation, and delightful hospitality.

The first day was devoted to gastrointestinal secretion and motility, and the rapidly expanding field of gastrointestinal hormones and other biologically active peptides. Reviews of the different cell types in both normal and tumour tissue were given by Julia Polak and E. Solcia. The next group of papers dealt with the effects of various disease states and pharmacological influences on both serum gastric levels and the actual population of G-cells. The role of gastrins in normal and abnormal states were discussed by J. H. Walsh and J. Hansky, and there was considerable discussion of tests for differentiating gastrinomas from other hypergastrinemic states.

Several speakers discussed different inhibitors of gastric secretion, some hormonal such as bombesin (V. Speranza), GIP (W. Creutzfeldt), somatostatin (M. Quatrini), and urogastrone (I. E. Gillespie), and, of course, the more recently introduced H2 receptor antagonist, cimetidine. In studies on cimetidine going over many months, there was no evidence in humans of either rebound secretion or hyperplasia as noted in some animal work.

Possible clinical applications of both bioassay and radioimmunoassay of serum cholecystokinin particularly in patients with pancreatic disease was raised by R. F. Harvey and by J. F. Rehfeld and progress with plasma secretin estimations was reviewed by E. Straus. Professor Barbara's group described inhibition of secretion by trithiozine. Bertaccini reviewed the effects of a series of peptides related to substance P on smooth muscle contraction at different levels of the gastrointestinal tract. Gastro-duodenal motility in both health and disease was reviewed by J. J. Misiewicz.

The next main topic was the gastric surface epithelium, with an opening review by R. Lambert on various individual factors influencing the rate of renewal of gastric mucosal cells, the production and characteristics of mucus and changes in gastritis. Several papers dealt with mucosal growth and function, and the influence of H2 receptor antagonists. J. H. Baron discussed pathophysiology of hypersecretion, and the final session was on medical and surgical treatment.

The well-judged timing of the second symposium is a tribute to the productive state of all these aspects of gastroenterology, and to the foresight of the organisers.

I. E. G. AND J. H. B.

International symposium on intensive care in hepatology and gastroenterology

This symposium, which will include a session on emergency endoscopy, will be held in Marseille from 26-28 September 1977. Details from Dr J. Di Costanzo, Hôpital Sainte-Marguerite, 270, boulevard Sainte-Marguerite, Marseille, France. (Tél. (91) 75.57.86- 75.91.50-Poste 511 13274 Marseille Cedex 2).

British Council: Paediatric Gastroenterology

A residential course will be held in Birmingham, 12-24 February 1978, for senior registrars, lecturers, and consultants from overseas, with experience and a special interest in paediatric gastroenterology. Directors of Studies: Professor Charlotte M. Anderson and Professor A. S. McNeish. Fee £400. Apply through the British Council in your own country. Closing date for receipt of applications in London, 1 September 1977.

Books


The four volumes of this classic series total over 4000 pages and this second volume on The Small and Large Intestine includes 44 chapters by 67 contributors from many parts of the world. There are elegant contributions on the embryology, gross anatomy, and microscopic appearances of the normal intestine; the scanning electron microscopic pictures of the colonic mucosa deserve special mention, Pathological anatomy is well illustrated, sometimes in colour, and these anatomic chapters are well supported by contributions on the radiological appearances of barium and angiographic studies. Physiological aspects of assimilation and electrolyte exchange are dealt with succinctly in a modern idiom and there is an interesting section on the ecology of the gut with contributions on host immunity and bacterial population.

The clinician who wishes to learn about a relatively uncommon disorder or a particular facet of a common disease will find the answer. If he wants to know how to investigate a patient with malabsorption or how to manage a patient with colitis he will find himself in more difficulty because of the amount of information presented. The editor's aim was that the series should be encyclopaedic without being ponderous. The first aim is achieved up to 1973 but the sheer size of the book makes it unsuitable for consecutive reading. Most readers will find that they read sections according to their interest or current clinical problem. Dipping into the book they will find some masterly reviews—for example, the chapters on carbohydrate assimilation, protein-losing gastroenteropathy, the carcinoid syndrome, and many others.

This series is indispensable as a standard reference work for the library of a department of gastroenterology, postgraduate medical centre, or medical school. Many gastroenterologists may feel that easy access to this series in a library is sufficient for their personal need.

J. E. LENNARD-JONES

Frontiers of Gastrointestinal Research. Volume 2 Enzymology of the Liver


Volume 2 of the series Frontiers of Gastrointestinal Research is devoted to the subject of hepatic enzymology. It consists of seven papers by an international panel of experts including Professor G. Neale from Dublin. The subjects are diverse, ranging from the enzymology of the drug metabolising system to that of hepatic cancer. Each topic is dealt with in full and there is an extensive bibliography. In view of the title of this volume it is obvious that in general there is a very strong biochemical bias but the clinical implications of the topics discussed are developed, particularly in the papers on Vitamin D metabolism and bilirubin conjugation. A useful review of the drug metabolising