Notes and activities

2nd International Symposium on Gastrointestinal 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 hypergastrinaemic 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 H_2 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. Gastrointestinal 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 H_2 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

Gastroenterology Vol. 2, The Small and Large Intestine, 3rd edn. Edited by H. L. Bockus. (£29.95.) W. B. Saunders: London. 1976.

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 anatomical chapters are well supported by contributions on the radiological appearances of barium and angiographic studies. Physiological aspects of assimilation and electrolytes 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 is 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 Edited by Leo van der Reis. (Pp. 295. £34.) S. Karger: Basel, München, Paris, London, New York, Sydney.

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 perhaps in the papers on Vitamin D metabolism and bilirubin conjugation.

A useful review of the drug metabolising

enzyme system in the liver and the variable effects of the major groups of inducing agents is followed by an account of the relationship between bone disease of various types and the probable alteration of Vitamin D metabolism produced by anti-epileptic drugs.

The two major 'liver' enzymes of diagnostic importance in clinical practice are separately dealt with. The value in particular of 5' nucleotidase and alkaline phosphatase in the diagnosis of liver disease of infancy is stressed and in the chapter on alkaline phosphatase. Regan isoenzyme and its variants are included.

A chapter describing the major routes of alcohol metabolism in the hepatocyte, their relative importance, and the effects of alcohol on the metabolism of other compounds is followed by an interesting and extensive review of the many abnormalities of enzyme secretion and control found in autonomous hepatic tumours. The subject is a complex and confusing one and the links between the abnormalities noted and the clinical problems of hepatoma are at the moment restricted.

A chapter on bilirubin conjugation and in particular on the properties of the various UDP glycosyltransferases both in the liver and other organs completes this volume.

The papers are excellent and for those looking for an authoritative paper on each of the topics one could not do better. As the approach is rather biochemical it is difficult to see whether this will be a volume that appeals to the clinician as opposed to the research worker. To neither will the price appeal—even by modern standards this is expensive, £34—for 292 pages.

A. E. READ

Radiology of the Small Intestine By Richard H. Marshak and Arthur E. Lindner (Pp. 620; illustrated; £24.75). Saunders: Philadelphia.

For the second edition of this book, first published five years ago, three new chapters have been added by invited authors, on carcinoma metastatic to the small bowel, angiography, and immunoglobulin deficiency diseases.

For various reasons, small bowel radiology was for many years rather disappointing; a glance at the text and illustrations of this book suffices to show how techniques and knowledge have advanced to the standards of the present day.

The opening chapter is a short survey of

examination techniques; here one is surprised at the author's submission that at least one small bowel film should be obtained as part of the routine investigation of the upper gastrointestinal tract. Similarly, there is no mention of metoclopramide which is quite frequently used in the United Kingdom. The remaining chapters cover diseases of the small bowel in systematic fashion. Perusal of the text shows that likely questions are readily answered and criticisms are few. It is, however, surprising that there is only one paragraph on TB, though this reflects its rarity in the United States at the present time. Also, one might have expected some mention of yersinia infection in a current textbook. The authors have sensibly included a chapter on Crohn's colitis and ileocolitis, although the illustrations in this section are, sadly, almost all of single contrast studies.

The text is informative, and easy to read, and this volume can be unhesitatingly recommended to all in the field of gastroenterology. The foreword to the first edition proclaimed that the book would become a radiographic classic; I am sure that it has.

B. M. THOMAS

Surgery of Peptic Ulcer By René Menguy. (Pp. 297; illustrated; £11.00). Saunders: London. 1976. A book of this type, which relies largely on the personal views and experience of René Menguy, demands attention. However, the personal reflections are sometimes hard to find in a text which follows the traditional pattern of presenting this subject. There is little new in the pathophysiology that has not been elaborated in other books. Radiological diagnosis is considered at length with numerous illustrations, whereas endoscopy receives little attention and gastroscopy, though a subheading in the text, is not even listed in the index.

The book is intended for those who may find 'the state of the art confusing'. This may excuse the numerous diagrams of technical manoeuvres. The discussion on surgical treatment of duodenal ulcers is good and includes the author's valuable personal view of proximal gastric vagotomy. The chapter on the sequelae of surgery is less satisfactory and somewhat abbreviated.

Undoubtedly the best part of the book relates to the observations on acute gastric mucosal lesions and, where his advice might be debated, his experience must be respected.

C. G. CLARK

Liver Cell Cancer Edited by H. M. Cameron, D. A. Linsell, and G. P. Warwick (Pp. xvi + 296; \$41.95). Elsevier Scientific Publishing: Amsterdam and New York. 1977.

This is the second book on liver cancer to be published in the last few months. The editors and contributors are internationally based and include many of the best workers in this area. The clinical features of hepatoma as seen in Africa south of the Sahara are well covered, and there is an excellent account on the geographical pathology of this tumour by Linsell and Higginson. Evidence relating to hepatoma and cirrhosis association is also clearly and topically presented in this chapter, and it is a pity that the same topic is less well considered in some of the subsequent chapters.

For those interested in chemical hepatotoxins there is an excellent review of the cell replication underlying liver cancer and the many new studies on the immunological aspects are considered in the final two contributions, although these are somewhat technical in approach.

An expensive but worthwhile volume.

ROGER WILLIAMS

The Coeliac Society

The Coeliac Society have published the 1977-78 *List of Gluten-free Manufactured Products*. This is the seventh edition of the list and contains a number of deletions and additions, and it replaces all previous editions. It costs 25p, post free. Two of the Society's other publications are the *Coeliac Handbook* and the *Coeliac Condition Booklet*. The *Handbook* contains medical, dietetic, and general chapters as well as recipes and the food list. The price is £1 post free, although patient-members do not have to pay the full price. The *Coeliac Condition Booklet* contains the same main chapters as the *Handbook*, but not the recipes or food list. Its price is 40p, post free, and it is intended for students and nurses. In June 1977, a gluten-free *Recipe Book* will be available, price £1, post free. Any doctor wishing to have a supply of application forms to make it easier for patients to join the Society should write to the Secretary of the Coeliac Society, Miss Kay Leighton PO Box 181, London, NW2 2QY enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. This form is appropriate not only for patients with newly diagnosed coeliac disease but also for patients with dermatitis herpetiformis.