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 6JQ. Closing dates for applications: 1 February and 1 August.

Royal Free Hospital: Diagnosis and management of hepato-biliary disease

This course will be held on 25 October 1978 (Visiting Professor David S. Zimmon, New York University). Topics will include biochemical and immunological methods, scanning, radiology, liver biopsy, endoscopy, surgery, gallstone dissolution, endoscopic papillotomy, clinicopathological conference, and case presentations. The registration (which includes lunch) is £10. Apply to Professor Dame Sheila Sherlock, Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG.

Troisièmes Journées Francophones d’Hepato-gastro-entérologie

This meeting, organised by the Société Nationale Française de Gastro-entérologie, will be held in Lyons from 13-16 March 1979. Details may be obtained from S. Erlinger, Secrétaire des Séances, Hôpital Beaujon, 100 Bd. du Général Leclerc, 92118 Clichy CEDEX, France.

Second International Symposium on Hormonal Receptors in Digestive Tract Physiology

This symposium will be held at Montpellier, France, 3-5 May, 1979. Details may be obtained from Eurecept, Hospital Bichat, INSERM U.10, 75877 Paris Cedex 18, France.

Books

Atlas of Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography By E. T. Stewart, J. A. Vennes, and J. E. Geenen. (Pp. 366. Illustrated. £35-45.) C. V. Mosby: St. Louis. 1977. This atlas, although seemingly expensive, contains clearly the best collection of radiographs available on the subject of ERCP. Each plate is preceded by a short clinical history and followed by a careful description of the changes demonstrated. This makes it valuable reading for the training endoscopist, but, having read it, one is not likely to go back to it again and, making the atlas better suited to the hospital library than to one’s personal collection.

The book is well presented with chapters covering the development of the pancreas and biliary tree as well as the normal and abnormal conditions affecting the appearances of both duct systems. In such a rapidly growing subject it was good to see a section on endoscopic papillotomy. In areas of controversy in interpretation, such as carcinoma of the pancreas and chronic pancreatitis, the authors have collated data from multiple reported series to build a picture of the changes one might expect.

Two chapters were disappointing. A long list of indications for ERCP was presented with a misleading bias towards the technique, making no mention of abdominal ultrasound, intravenous or percutaneous cholangiography. Secondly, there was a detailed explanation of the method of cannulation describing only the ‘long route’ favoured by American endoscopists. In admitting that this technique frequently results in the duodenoscope lying over the pancreatic duct, the authors then describe oblique and lateral positioning of the patient to obtain views of the obscured areas. They would have done better to emphasise the ‘short route’, which obviates the necessity to reposition the patient in most cases.

Overall, the quality of the radiographic reproduction and accompanying description is excellent and the volume is recommended for departmental libraries in hospitals with gastroenterologists in training.

G. L. Mez

The Language of Medicine. Its Evolution, Structure and Dynamics By John H. Dirckx. (Pp. 326. £15-95.) Harper & Row: 1976. This is a most interesting museum of words to be kept conveniently handy. ‘Gut’ is derived from the Anglo-Saxon gutta = channel, from geotan = to pour. ‘Bolus’ comes by analogy with the old-fashioned method of making up a dose of bad-tasting medicine in a large wad of dough or molasses. This dosage form, still much used in veterinary medicine, was called a ‘bolus’ from Greek bolos = a clod of earth. ‘Gas’ is neither Romance nor Anglo-Saxon nor Greek, and indeed did not exist until the 17th century when it was coined by the Belgian monk and physician, Jan van Helmont. Because it supplied a need in the language of chemistry and physics, it spread immediately to every civilised country. It is used by physicians and laymen in America and the Middle East for intestinal flatus, although the British prefer ‘wind.’ Well worth dipping into!

Gastrointestinal Motility in Health and Disease Edited by H. L. Duthie. (Pp. 684. Figs. £15-95.) MTP Press: Lancaster. This book is based on the proceedings of the 6th International Symposium on Gastrointestinal Motility. The sections on interdigestive migration complexes and lower oesophageal sphincter control are of particular interest, and there are also sections on intestinal polypeptides, neurotransmitters, methods of analysis, colonic control, and clinical aspects of gastrointestinal motility.