Notes and activities

BSG Research Award 1979

Five-hundred word summaries of personal research work are invited by the Awards Committee who will recommend to Council the recipient of the Award for 1979. The Award consists of a medal and £100 prize. Entrants must be 40 years or less (on 31 December 1979) but need not be a member of the BSG. All (or a substantial part) of the work must have been performed in the United Kingdom or Eire. The recipient of the Award will be required to deliver a 40 minute lecture at the Plenary Session at the Spring meeting 1980. Entrants please write to Professor R. H. Dowling, Chairman, Awards Committee, The Rayne Institute, University College Hospital, 5 University Street, London, WC1E 6JJ, by 1 January 1980.

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.

Annual Oxford Course of Gastroenterology

This course will be held 6-9 January 1980. The topics to be covered are: parenteral nutrition, small intestinal bypass, some aspects of ulcerative colitis, treatment of Crohn's disease, and varieties of colitis. For further particulars, please apply to Dr. S. C. Truelove, Nuffield Department of Medicine, Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford OX2 6HE.

Gut:

Volumes 1-6, 7-16 Swets & Zeitlinger, P.O. Box 810, 2160 SZ Lisse, The Netherlands, has available from stock volumes 1-6 of *Gut*. If sufficient interest exists volumes 7-16 will be reprinted in the near future. Please address your inquiries to the above-mentioned company.

Books

The Treatment of Obesity Edited by J. F. Munro. (Pp. 230. £12.95.) MTP Press: Lancaster. 1979.

This book is the second volume in the Current Status of Modern Therapy Series. The editor, J. F. Munro, has joined with

12 fellow experts to produce an outstanding text. The first chapter is a beautifully concise and balanced account by Garrow on 'How to treat and when to treat'; as expected, it contains many quotable lines. Then follow chapters on dietary management by MacCuish and Ford, psychopharmacology of anorexic drugs by Blundell and Burridge, their clinical use by the editor. Physical exercise is discussed by Björntorp and colleagues and Howard reviews the use of starvation and semi-starvation regimens including his own ideal very low calorie liquid diet supplying optimal amounts of protein and carbohydrate, consistent with good health and relatively few side-effects. This chapter contains an unfortunate misprint (page 152, para 2, line 7) where 'admitting' should read 'omitting'. Baddeley's chapter on surgical treatment is a *tour de force* and Stunkard and Brownell conclude with an outstanding chapter on behaviour therapy.

I enjoyed reading this well-produced and stimulating book. I shall refer to it frequently.

T. R. E. PILKINGTON

Liver Disorders in Childhood A. P. Mowat. (Pp. 407. Illustrated. £18.50). Butterworths: London. 1979.

This volume provides what Dr Mowat intends—a very comprehensive and up-to-date account of disorders of the liver and biliary system in childhood. The book is extremely well organised, containing many clear illustrations, figures, and tables. At the end of each chapter there is a helpful bibliography and list of references.

The first two chapters give a concise account of the anatomy and physiology of the liver and biliary tract and provide a sound basis for the disorders which are subsequently discussed. All the common and rare liver diseases encountered in both the developed and developing parts of the world are covered and, deservedly, Indian childhood cirrhosis is given a chapter of its own. Many important developments have been made in the investigation of hepatic structure and function in recent years and the last two chapters deal very well with the assessment and investigation of hepatic biliary disease.

This book is an important addition to the literature and provides a valuable source of information not only for the practising clinician but also for all others concerned with liver diseases in childhood. It is a must for the shelves of all paediatricians.

J. T. HARRIES

Protein-Calorie Malnutrition Edited by Robert E. Olson. (Pp. 467. Illustrated. £21.30). Academic Press, USA. 1975.

Although this book was published in 1975 it still remains one of the few collections of advanced reviews for physicians interested in the effects of malnutrition on different organs of the body and the metabolic consequences of inadequate intakes of protein, energy, and other nutrients. During the last five years the emphasis in protein-energy malnutrition, or 'PEM' as it is now called, has switched from considering protein deficiency as the dominant cause to emphasising the importance of energy supply and its effects on protein metabolism. This aspect is considered briefly both from the metabolic and therapeutic aspects but more detailed consideration is given to the aminoacid requirements at different ages and the mechanisms of adaptation to low protein intakes. Hegstead's chapter on protein turnover would now be considered very out of date and readers would be better referring to recent reviews by Waterlow's group. The works reviewed on cellular energy metabolism and on carbohydrate and fat metabolism in PEM have changed little, however, and are well covered. Other good chapters include Alleyne's review of mineral metabolism and a summary by Edelman of his work on cell-mediated immunity in PEM. Scrimshaw also re-emphasises the large experimental and epidemiological literature demonstrating the important interactions between malnutrition and infection.

For those more interested in the clinical management of malnourished children, the Nigerian experience is set out with its finding of a higher mortality rate if children are admitted to hospital rather than being kept at home where cross-infection is less likely and frequent feeding can more readily be instituted. Even so, their mortality is still often 10% compared with recent death rates of less than 1% in the Tropical Metabolism Research Unit in Jamaica where the emphasis is on combating infection, correcting the electrolyte imbalances, and increasing food intake only gradually in order to avoid precipitating acute heart failure. The Thai system, detailed by Suskind in the book, has a 5-7% mortality.

This book is wide-ranging and specialised: it is unsuitable for medical students but a valuable book for paediatricians and those physicians wishing to broaden their view of the nutritional aspects of their patients' illnesses.

W. P. T. JAMES