Notes and activities

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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.

Fibreoptic and Endoscopy

The Hospital Physicists' Association is organising a one-day meeting on fibre-optics and endoscopy to be held in London on 8 November 1979. The programme and application forms are available from Mr. D. W. Field, Hospital Physicists' Association, 47 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QX.

Pancreatic Disease 1980, Leeds

A symposium on the investigation and management of pancreatic disease will be held at St. James's University Hospital, Leeds, UK, on 10–11 April 1980. Topics include isocepe, ultrasound and CT scanning, ERCP, laparoscopy, function tests, amylase and trypsin measurements, the medical and surgical treatment of pancreatitis and carcinoma; transplantation. Speakers include: M. F. Bewick, Joan Braganza, E. Elias, J. T. Harries, C. Imrie, W. R. Lees, C. N. Mallinson, P. R. Salmon, J. E. Trapnell, K. G. Wormsley, and staff from the Leeds Teaching Hospitals. Details from: Dr C. J. Mitchell, Department of Medicine, St. James's University Hospital, Leeds LS9 7TF, England.

Second International Colonoscopy Congress

The Second International Congress on Colonoscopy and Diseases of the Large Bowel will be held 6–8 March 1980 in Bal Harbour, Florida. Write for details to John P. Christie, MD, 7330 SW 62nd Place-Suite 220, South Miami, Florida 33143, USA (Tel: (305) 667-7440).

First International Symposium: Biology of Exocrine Pancreatic Cell

This will be held at Toulouse, 7–9 May 1980, French National Institute for Health and Medical Research (INSERM). Information from Professor A. Ribet, Dr L. Pradayrol, and C. Susini, INSERM U 151, CHU Rangueil, 31054 Toulouse, CEDEX France.

Eighth International Cystic Fibrosis Congress

This Congress will be held in Toronto, Canada, 26–30 May 1980. Details may be obtained from Congress Secretariat, 8th International Congress on Cystic Fibrosis, 191 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 1P7.

Books


This small, and—by today's standards—reasonably-priced book, is an up-to-date account of the methods available for the creation and care of intestinal stomas and for the management of stoma problems. All of the chapters are admirably concise, well-illustrated and full of the practical advice so useful in management of the stoma patient. No doubt this reflects careful editorship and Mr. Ian Todd is to be congratulated on this account and for assembling a team of surgeons and physicians capable of dealing so authori- tatively with the problems posed by intestinal stomas. The book contains useful accounts of the newer developments including the Erlangen continent magnetic colostomy, the Kock continent ileostomy, and temporary loop ileostomy. A large section of the book is devoted to the wider implications of intestinal stoma formation with chapters on nursing care of the stoma patient, psychological and social aspects of life with an intestinal stoma, and problems associated with rehabilitation. All of these chapters are written by stomatherapists or nurses, and there is a contribution from the General Secretary of the Ileostomy Association. The book is a balanced, comprehensive, and readable account. It is recommended not only for those doctors concerned with stoma formation and care, but for all members of the medical and allied professions dealing with stoma patients.

D. C. CARTER


Although publication of the proceedings of a symposium in book form is often a disappointing exercise, this particular volume is certainly more successful than most. There is, of course, tremendous interest in all of the many new developments in the field of H2-receptor antagonists drugs, and in view of their widespread use and efficacy there is great interest in the findings of all engaged in clinical trials and other methods of evaluation of cimetidine.

The proceedings of this symposium held at the Westminster Hospital in May 1978 have been expertly brought together and edited by Mr. Wastell and Dr. Lance, and the book is very readable either straight through or when used as a source of reference on a particular point. As is the custom with such published proceedings, the questions and answers in the open discussion following each paper have been published, and they are a most delightful reflection of the personalities of the participants, most of them well known for their contributions to investigative gastroenterology. These discussions from the floor of the meeting often serve to emphasise the most important questions remaining unanswered, and they are a useful stimulus to further studies.

Virtually all the topics of major clinical interest with respect to the use of this important drug are dealt with in this publication. Quite rightly, most space is devoted to duodenal and gastric ulcer, and the large and difficult topic of non-ulcer dyspepsia is also skilfully reviewed. Other topics include oesophageal reflux, upper gastrointestinal bleeding, gastritis and duodenitis, and other situations in which it might be beneficial to reduce gastric acid secretion, such as the prophylaxis against inhalation into the respiratory tree. Experimental studies on other possible mechanisms of action of cime- tidine—for example, on blood flow—are also presented.

There will doubtless be other national and international symposia on this important drug and there is clearly a need for up to date, accurate reporting of recent assessment of its efficacy in a wide...
range of clinical situations. The publishers have done well to produce this volume in a relatively short space of time, and, although it may be overtaken within the next year or two, it still serves as a useful summary of carefully evaluated findings in most important gastroenterological fields. It is a good volume, good value, good reading, and can be thoroughly recommended to devotee of gastric physiology and interested bystander alike.

I. E. GILLESPIE

Comparative Animal Nutrition: Nitrogen, Electrolytes, Water and Energy Metabolism

The average gastroenterologist will find little in this book of application to clinical practice. It deals, in a very general way, with four aspects of animal nutrition: energy, nitrogen, electrolyte and water metabolism. As such it is a useful introduction to these topics but draws virtually nothing from the vast amount of information that there is on similar aspects of human metabolism, and consequently much of its possible value as a book of comparative nutrition is lost.

The chapter on energy metabolism defines clearly the currently used terms in this field, such as digestible energy, metabolisable energy, calorigenic effects, etc., and how they are calculated. It fails, however, to justify the physiological basis for these and one has the feeling that in a field where there are now new and exciting concepts we are being asked to restrict our thinking for the sake of long-established jargon.

In the discussion of nitrogen metabolism, the central role of bacteria is emphasised. Protozoa get their amino acids by eating bacteria, while higher animals rely on bacteria to synthesise amino acids for them. The part played by microflora in human metabolism is not mentioned, but it is something to which we have perhaps not given sufficient attention.

Half the book is taken up by a review of water metabolism in the major phyla. It makes fascinating reading to discover the ingenious ways in which water intake and loss is controlled. Water may be acquired through surface membranes and skin, gills, the gut, and as metabolic water. The important role of the large intestine, particularly the rectum, in both acquiring and conserving water in higher orders is stressed.

Overall, however, this book is an introductory text only. Unless you are particularly interested in the blood nitrogen concentration in equilibrated estuarine polychaetes or fascinated by the thought of intrepid biologists chasing wild ungulates to measure their oxygen consumption, then it is not for you.

J. H. CUMMINGS

Drug Treatment of Gastrointestinal Disorders: Basic and Practical Principles

The book is third in the monographs in the Clinical Pharmacology 'series'. The book is primarily pharmacological in outlook, aiming to assist students, house officers, and practising physicians. Each section has a brief clinical introduction before a more detailed assessment of the various treatments available. A limited critical review is given, often with very helpful tables summarising the clinical trials. The need for controlled trials in drug therapy runs through this monograph—indeed, it starts with the observation that in the decade 1964–74 only 0.9% of 35 228 citations on gastroenterological therapy were randomised controlled trials.

The text is clearly written and well referenced (up to December 1977), with a comprehensive range of drugs being discussed. Considerable weight is put on the critical reviews from the literature but is somewhat biased by its American origin (for example, metronidazole has not been approved by the FDA for use in giardiasis so quinacrine is suggested as the first line treatment). As this is primarily a pharmacological book, the clinical aspects of gastrointestinal disease are only briefly discussed, except perhaps in the sections on the liver and pancreas—the latter being very much the weakest chapter, being clinically confusing and repetitive.

This book is not for the specialist gastroenterologist, but is ideal for students and aspiring specialists who wish to assess the validity of the treatments they recommend.

D. COLIN-JONES

Dietary Fibre: Current Developments of Importance to Health

This symposium report contains 17 papers presented at the Third Nutrition Symposium held by the Kellogg Company in London in December 1977. Contributors from the United Kingdom presented all but one of the papers, over half of which were concerned with gastrointestinal disease or physiology. Several of these papers contain work already familiar to readers of this journal: the work on measurement and effects of diet on whole-gut transit time by Cummings, the study of the prevalence of asymptomatic diverticular disease and dietary fibre consumption in vegetarians and non-vegetarians by Gear, and Brodribb's work on the treatment of diverticular disease. These papers followed Eastwood's paper in which he reviewed approaches to the study of the epidemiology of diverticular disease.

Although the report is heavily weighted towards the large bowel, a true reflection of interests at the time, there were two papers concerned with heart disease (Morris's epidemiological studies and Truswell's review of experimental blood lipid studies) and introductory papers on the chemistry and analysis of dietary fibre. Heaton discussed dietary fibre and its effects on satiety and related these to overnutrition and obesity. The discussion which follows some of the papers contains some valuable observations.

Although mineral availability was discussed by one contributor, the overall balance of the report might have been improved by a more extensive review of possible deleterious effects of high-fibre diets. References to published work are mostly dated not later than 1977, though one or two for 1978 have been inserted. Comprehensive reference lists are given with some papers such as Losowsky's review of the effects of dietary fibre on intestinal absorption, while some lists are very short. The index is good, and the report will be of value to anyone wishing to be reasonably up to date with work on dietary fibre in the United Kingdom, but for gastroenterologists much of the contents will already be familiar.

ANTHONY R. LEEDS

References

References in the text and in the list of references should now follow the Vancouver style. (See Instructions to authors.)