Notes and activities

Dr Heinz Karger Prize 1981
The Dr Heinz Karger Memorial Foundation invites the submission of original research papers on 'Intestinal absorption of peptides', for the 1981 Karger Prize of Fr7000. The closing date is 28 February 1981. Details from Dr Heinz Karger Memorial Foundation, Allschwilerstrasse 10, Postfach, CH-4009 Basel, Switzerland.

Société Nationale Française de Gastro-Entérologie
The Society's next Research Forum and 7ème Journées Francophones d'Hépato-Gastro-Entérologie will be held at Toulouse in March 1981. Details from Professor Y Le Quintrec, Hospital Rothschild, 33 Boulevard de Picipus 75571, Paris, edex 12.C

International Symposium on Dietary Fibre in Human and Animal Nutrition
This symposium will be held at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand, 23–28 May 1982. Details from the Symposium Secretariat at University Extension, Massey University, PO Box 63, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

International Symposium on Inflammatory Bowel Diseases
This symposium will be held in Jerusalem, Israel, 7–9 September 1981, and will be organised in panels devoted to the aetiology, pathogenesis, and management of these diseases. The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 28 February 1981. Details from Dr Daniel Rachmilewitz, Department of Gastroenterology, Hadassah University Hospital, PO Box 12000, Jerusalem, Israel.

Books


This monograph sets out the methods and attitudes from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center of those clinicians who have had an especial interest in tumours of the large gut and anus. The book is as much of a tribute to the authors as to their Institute, for providing a frame-work in which clinical results were documented so well that the book was possible.

There are 14 chapters by 13 authors, in 197 pages of easily-understandable text, tables, and photographs, plus a good index.

As always in a short review, the space for adverse comment is, perforce, longer than that for compliments. Thus, I hasten to say this book is a 'must' for all clinicians with a special or general interest in the subject and for the libraries of the institutions in which they work.

The chapters of special note are on epidemiology, early diagnosis, and those devoted to the management of metastatic carcinoma of the large bowel. Adenomas, and the rarer neoplasms of the large gut and anal tumours, are also well covered, and the text forms a useful reference source.

Sadly, the weakest part concerns the 'ordinary' surgical aspects of treatment for colorectal cancer. Little attention has been paid to the surgery for complex problems—bowel obstruction or perforation—which constitute 20–25% of patients presenting to most community hospitals. Furthermore, there is little guidance, or opinion, about some of the more contentious issues of today's therapy: the role of transverse colostomy to 'protect' the anastomosis in low anterior resection; the place of the end-to-end mechanical stapling devices; methods to salvage patients once complications of colorectal surgery have occurred. The description of the pull-through operation is too short and vague, and in the section on abdomino-perineal resection of the rectum, the methods described would be considered by many to be outdated and, on occasion, frankly 'incorrect'—sitting functional stomas in main wounds, for example. The section on 'Care of the patient with a colostomy' is rather superficial, but gives some references for additional reading.

A useful, but incomplete, chapter is that devoted to the medical problems of patients in the perioperative period. Pain control and postoperative pressure ventilation are not described—both are relevant to the thesis of the chapter: that the maintenance of adequate cardiovascular-respiratory function is crucial in the management of many of these patients.

Looking to the future, the discourse on immunological reactivity of patients with colorectal cancer is worthwhile, for it attempts to make sense of a subject which is quite unclear at present, but it provides enough data to inform and to stimulate further interest.

For me, the highlight of the book is the chapter on the management of advanced colon and rectal cancer (Chapter 8—Horace Whiteley). In this difficult field, a sense of realism and empathy pervades the pages, with the patient's individual problem being the fulcrum of discussion. Emphasis on definitions of the different clinical patterns which present and possible treatment methods for each 'syndrome' is most helpful to clinicians who are attempting to treat such a patient.

The Editor (Maus W. Stearns, Jr) has put together a most useful and inexpensive monograph. The defects of omission and commission in this volume prompt me to suggest that a sequel is required detailing the controversies in surgical technique that are currently being discussed. The views of the team of MSKCC on these subjects would make interesting reading.

L P FIELDS

Gastrointestinal Mucosal Blood Flow

This is acknowledgedly a book for the super-specialist. It represents the proceedings of a small meeting (the date and place of which are not mentioned) which was well supported by industry. This individual contributions are of high level, and most of the experts in this field were assembled. The accent is rather more on gastric than on intestinal blood-flow, which reflects the very natural preoccupation with the relationship between peptic ulceration and mucosal supply. The coverage is excellent, and all the papers are brief and well edited. The very last contribution, from Professor Lundgrants' laboratory in Gothenburg, is a modest and authoritative condensation of the work of this famous team over the last 20 years. All in all, the Editor is to be congratulated on composing an excellent route map for those who wish to pursue research in this area.

ADRIAN MARSTON