Perhaps the next edition will include an assessment of computerised image-analysis if it makes sufficient impact in this field. The bibliography is superb, but selective on certain topics, and the illustrations are of high quality throughout. There is a minor dislocation of references 194 and 195 in the valuable description of Crohn's disease of the small intestine.

Clearly this is a compact, informative volume which should be on the bookshelves of every pathologist, physician, surgeon, and radiologist who investigates gastrointestinal disease.

H THOMPSON

The Irritable Gut By W Grant Thompson. (Pp 275. Illustrated. £11.95.) University Park Press: Lancaster and Baltimore, Maryland. 1979.

Functional disorders of the alimentary canal—the subtitle of this book—are responsible for much of the work of any gastroenterological clinic. As most of the conditions have little that can be objectively demonstrated or measured it is not surprising that the literature on them has been proportionately less than that on other, more defined diseases. Professor Thompson's most readable book goes a considerable way to meet this deficiency.

In the first section he selectively discusses aspects of gut motility, bowel habit, gut reaction, and dietary fibre as a physiological background to the main part of the book in which he looks at various syndromes in detail. The irritable bowel, proctalgia fugax, borborygmi, the chronic abdomen, and globus are among 11 conditions in which mechanisms in their production, their manifestations, and management are considered. Just over 800 references are quoted, resulting in an excellent review of previous work and opinions.

With rapidly advancing knowledge of gut hormones and to a lesser extent gut motility Professor Thompson recognises that some conditions now thought to be functional will turn out to be organic. However, as one man's review and opinion of the position up to 1978, this book is well worth reading and enjoying. It can be recommended to any doctor wishing to increase his knowledge of the irritable gut and the advice and management of the various conditions is always sound. Even experienced gastroenterologists will find much to interest, and at times amuse them.

J HOWEL JONES

Ulcerative Colitis By M J Goodman and M Sparberg. (Pp. 205. Illustrated. £13.50.) John Wiley: Chichester. 1978.

Drs Goodman and Sparberg have collated their experience of ulcerative colitis gained in Oxford and Chicago by writing this monograph. It is intended for the general interest rather than the specialist gastroenterologist and, in the authors' words, to be 'a handbook for the management of patients with this disease'. All aspects of the disease are covered, including chapters on the management of children and of pregnant women with ulcerative colitis. Clinical presentation, diagnosis, and treatment are covered at length. The chapter on aetiology is disappointingly brief, especially in a book from a series which purports to provide an up-to-date account of pathophysiology as well as management. In general the authors provide a clear and practical approach to the management of the disease, although not all gastroenterologists will necessarily agree with them at every point. For example, the place of antibiotics in the treatment of severe colitis and the role of sulphonamides other than sulphasalazine are particularly controversial.

Although the text is written in a clear style, I found it to be rather long-winded and there is much repetition. A major criticism is the lack of references. Although the authors intend to provide only a selected reference list, it does severely limit the usefulness of the book as a monograph and occasionally allows dogmatic statements to be made without adequate documentation. Nevertheless, the book succeeds in its aim and the non-specialist will find it a helpful source of information.

The book is beautifully produced and is reasonably priced. I would recommend it to anyone who wishes to gain an introduction to the management of ulcerative colitis.

D P JEWELL

The Liver and Biliary System in Infants and Children Edited by R. K. Chandra. (Pp. 341. Illustrated. £20.00.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh, London, and New York. 1979.

Knowledge and experience of liver disorders in childhood has been accumulating so rapidly that there has been an indisputable need for a comprehensive volume bringing them into the paediatric ambit. This book represents an authoritative account by an international group

of contributors and provides a compact and informative introduction to hepatobiliary disorders in childhood. Not only are the practical problems of diagnosis and management discussed, but also controversial areas and research developments are placed in perspective for the non-specialist reader. At the end of each chapter there is a useful and comprehensive bibliography.

The early chapters are devoted to normal and pathological structure and function of the liver in childhood. Conceptually some of these early chapters are muddled and the choice of material idiosyncratic. The account of bile salt metabolism is excellent, yet, curiously, the remainder of this chapter is sketchy and provides the reader with little indication of the concepts of perhaps more important aspects of liver metabolism. Morphological changes are covered comprehensively though somewhat erratically and it is unfortunate that this otherwise valuable contribution is spoilt by the rather cramped illustrations.

The clinically orientated chapters contain much useful information. In particular, the chapter on fulminant liver failure is a helpful and up-to-date guide to 'the state of the art', and the section on drugs and the liver should prove of value to both those with a special interest in liver disorders and the general paediatrician. Surgery of the liver and bile ducts is dealt with at the end of the book and includes a perspective of the place of transplantation in childhood.

Overall, the book should prove useful to trainees and general paediatricians. In spite of its shortcomings in some areas, many gastroenterologists in the paediatric field will find themselves referring to it.

P. J. MILLA

Books received

Chemical Diagnosis of Disease Edited by Stanley S Brown, Frederick L Mitchell and Donald S Young. (Pp. 1383; illustrated; \$74.75) Elsevier/North-Holland: Amsterdam. 1980.

Renal Function in Anaesthesia and Surgery By D R Bevan (Pp. 239; illustrated; £15.20) Academic Press: London. 1980.

Correction

Figure 1, p. 50, January 1980: Prednisolone absorption in acute colitis, by P R Elliott *et al.* The units on the vertical axis indicating levels of free prednisolone should read 0, 20, 40, 60, 80 ng/ml and not 0, 100, 200, 300, 400 as published.