Each section of the book is followed by a general discussion, often the most probing part of the proceedings. For while the papers naturally emphasise the exciting explosion of knowledge in this field over the past few years, the discussions reveal how little we still know about the natural history, epidemiology, and pathophysiology of this common disease.

Should we strive to diagnose a condition which often remains asymptomatic—or does it? Should we always advise treatment? Can we prevent gallstones recurring after medical or surgical treatment? Or are all duct stones in patients after cholecystectomy retained stones? These questions are all discussed if not answered. So in spite of occasional imbalance in the discussion, inevitable in symposium proceedings, the book does tackle real issues, and would be an interesting addition to any library.

T S LOW BEER

The Epidemiology of Chronic Digestive Disease By M J S Langman. £10.95. Edward Arnold: London. 1979.

This is a most useful little book—concise, informative, and stimulating, giving a remarkably clear picture of epidemiological factors associated with alimentary cancer, peptic ulcer, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, diverticular disease, appendicitis, gallstones, and pancreatitis.

Environmental factors associated with daily living are likely to make a major contribution to the cause of these diseases and all the time new facts are emerging. This book provides a comprehensive review of present-day knowledge. Associated or predisposing diseases, time trends, occupational, social, and dietary factors are all brought together and assessed.

The uniform method of presentation and the clear-cut critical comments make it remarkably easy to read. This is a book which will stimulate both the teacher and the students.

F AVERY JONES

Gastrointestinal Endoscopy: an Introduction for Assistants By David Hollanders. (Pp. 158. Illustrated. £4.75.) Ballière, Tindall: London. 1979.

On the whole I found this to be a good book. As far as I know it is the first occasion on which the importance of the endoscopy assistant has been acknowledged in a separate publication. The book provides an outline of the assistant's

expected role and duties. This, I feel, is important and provides a good basic text for nurses or technicians training to work in the endoscopy area.

There is one photograph and one paragraph (p. 60) which should never have been included and this refers to the blind-folded patient. To me, the eyes have it. During the procedure of endoscopy the eyes are the most important non-verbal channel of communication between the patient on the one hand and the doctor and the nurse on the other and are used to encourage and reassure the patient and to monitor discomfort, pain, or any change in the patient's condition. Blind-folding the patient is not humane and is a very backward step in a very forward-looking investigation.

PAULINE ELDERTON

Obesity and its Treatment Volume 1 By J E Blundell and R A McArthur. (Pp. 104. Illustrated. £10.25.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1979.

The book is one of the Annual Research Reviews on Psychology and Psychiatry; it is well written and incorporates much of the important literature in the field. In 1976 there were a number of conferences and reports on obesity research and this book draws heavily on these sources. The first part of the book covers the research on feeding and appetite control published in 1975, 1976, and the early part of 1977. If the book had appeared in late 1977 or in early or mid 1978, then it would have been a major contribution to the literature on appetite and food intake. However, appearing in late 1979, it is out of date, and several key works have been published which the book does not discuss, including Bray, G (ed), *Recent Advances in Obesity Research: II*, Newman, 1978; Lytle, L, Control of eating behaviour, in *Nutrition and the Brain*, Vol 2 (eds Wurtman, R, and Wurtman, J) Raven, 1977; and Powley, T, The ventromedial hypothalamic syndrome, satiety, and a cephalic phase hypothesis, *Psychological Review*, 84, 89–126, 1977. The chapters on feeding regulation would have been better published a year or two earlier as a review in a journal with an emphasis on the way new work is showing that the concept of appetite and satiety centres in the hypothalamus is untenable.

The second part of the book deals with the treatment of obesity and is much less satisfactory. The protein-sparing fast system, involving the use of relatively

small protein intakes, is dealt with far too briefly and has failed to include a cautionary note after the series of deaths in the United States. Surgical treatment is dealt with only in terms of the increasingly outmoded jejunoileal bypass but room is given to the observation that its main effect is to reduce food intake rather than to induce malabsorption. Behavioural and psychological therapy is considered without any details of technique and the review has missed the latest evidence that the group-based behavioural modification programmes fail to achieve any greater long-term success than the dismal results from other medical treatments.

This type of book is fine for beginners but only if published rapidly. Let us hope that Volume 2 is either up to date or critically analytical—ideally both.

W P T JAMES

Manual of Surgery of the Gallbladder, Bile Ducts, and Exocrine Pancreas By R E Hermann. (Pp. 306. Illustrated. \$92.40.) Springer-Verlag: Berlin, Heidelberg, New York.

This is the third in a series of 'surgical manuals designed to present current operative techniques and to explore various aspects of diagnosis and treatment'—the General Editor's description. The book is presented in a large format with clear print and an abundance of illustrations, some black-and-white but the majority coloured. There is an excellent coverage of operations on the gallbladder and bile ducts in the first section, and on the pancreas, the latter being considered only as an exocrine organ, in the second section.

The general arrangement is for introductory sections on anatomy and physiology to be succeeded by descriptions of congenital anomalies, inflammatory diseases, neoplasms (and cysts), trauma, and operative techniques. Most subjects are treated in considerable detail—for example, annular pancreas receives six pages including seven illustrations and eight good references are given to the literature on this subject. The drawings of operative techniques are explicit, sufficiently abstract to emphasise the important points yet sufficiently realistic to carry conviction.

There is of course a price to be paid for all this—a pretty steep one! I am delighted to have this book on my shelves, but would not have bought it. I cannot help feeling that it would have been possible to present the material less lavishly and