

in the United Kingdom. It details all the many possible procedures that might be done in gastroenterology units, and describes them all in impressively minute detail. The information and instructions are clearly tabulated. Comments such as 'check to see that the physician's toe lines up with the appropriate foot pedal', and photographs of the efficient looking assistants (always female, with nail varnish) and happy patients, may make the British gastroenterologist attempt the Vq examination. The book is not written for the doctor, but nevertheless contains useful tips, particularly about electrosurgery, although the picture of a large, raw steak on which to test the papillotome before use is almost shocking.

Some of the procedures described are not widely done by gastroenterologists in Great Britain, including the notorious string test for gastrointestinal bleeding, percutaneous cholangiography, oesophageal infusion test, saline load test for gastric retention, and the enterotest, which is a string test for intestinal parasites. Percutaneous liver biopsy might be included in the next edition, as it is becoming an outpatient procedure in the United States. Two criticisms are that complications of the more invasive tests are not properly described, for even the assistant should know what may go wrong after the patient has left the unit, and that the page numbers, which are centrally placed at the bottom of the pages, are frequently obliterated by the holes of the loose-leaf binding.

However, it is full of obvious and not-so-obvious information that is usefully collected together, and it will therefore be useful to gastroenterology units in Great Britain if it is read selectively. There is even an interesting appendix with sample flow charts and forms. I think it is worth the money.

R D H THOMPSON

Drug Reactions and the Liver Edited by Michael Davis, J Michael Tredger and Roger Williams. (Pp. 364. Illustrated. £20.) Pitman Books: London. 1981.

The emphasis of this book is on liver damage due to drugs but the content is by no means confined to this, and the title may not convey that the picture is painted on a broad canvas. Although the book is derived from papers presented at a symposium held over a year ago, the content is as up to date as necessary for those who will wish to use it. In the nature of conference proceedings, this is not a single cohesive story. There is a mixture of material

applicable to the practising physician and of material which is more directly of interest to those conducting research. There is repetition, there are differing views, and there are transcripts of discussions. All this makes for a colourful presentation but not for a stylised, easy to follow, formal picture. A Matisse rather than a Lorraine.

This book is arranged in sections, although I suspect the editors had difficulty in deciding on the organisation. The first part, headed 'Critical viewpoints', is broadly based, encompassing the reporting of drug reactions and mechanisms of drug hepatotoxicity. The second part is headed 'Patterns and variability of response'. The chapter on 'Spectrum of clinical lesions', by Zimmerman, is an excellent presentation of drug hepatotoxicity with lists and classifications of significance and usefulness.

There are parts devoted to major problems in the field of liver damage due to drugs. These include a comprehensive collection of articles on paracetamol-induced liver damage showing the extent of our knowledge and a few articles on isoniazid-induced liver damage showing the extent of our ignorance. There follows a major section on halothane-induced liver damage giving an excellent summary of the situation in a balanced way, including views from anaesthetists and from the drug industry. This clearly proclaims that the physician's viewpoint gives a very distorted picture by which to judge the use of this anaesthetic. The description of liver tumours produced by contraceptive and androgenic steroids is timely and helpful.

This book contains most of what is needed by the physician for his understanding of the present knowledge in drug reactions and the liver. It contains much more besides. It is not, however, an undemanding systematised presentation. The symposium was as much concerned with problems as with answers, which is the strength of this book and indicates the type of reader who would benefit most from it.

M S LOSOWSKY

Practical Management of Liver Disease By David R Triger. (Pp. 249. Illustrated. £9.50.) Blackwell Scientific Publications: Oxford. 1981.

This book is not only a manageable size but eminently readable. Its price is not prohibitive but would be more attractive if a paperback version were available. This would be more likely to reach those to whom this book is aimed—namely, the non-specialist who wishes to keep abreast of an