Textbook of gastroenterology and nutrition in infancy Edited by E Lebenthal. (Pp. 1133; illustrated: \$133.28.) New York: Raven Press. 1981. The explosion in the literature of paediatric gastroenterology over recent years continues with this new book in two volumes, the first called *Gastrointestinal development and perinatal nutrition* and the second *Gastrointestinal disease and nutritional inadequacies*. This approach stresses the vitally important linkage between gastrointestinal disease and nutrition in childhood, especially in early infancy. As the preface states 'a vast number of basically related subjects are covered by no less than one hundred contributors'. This illustrates very clearly the current complexity of this field but does lead to some overlapping in this text with a lack of a sense of overall unity in the book. Nevertheless, this book is very comprehensive and well referenced. It is a veritable mine of information for those interested in these fields. The particular strength of this text is its detailed and comprehensive account of the intra-uterine growth and development of the gastrointestinal tract and in the immediate neonatal period as covered in the first book.

The second book covers the more orthodox aspects of clinical paediatric gastroenterology. It consists of a series of essays on a number of important topics within this large subject. It is especially valuable in its discussion of the biochemical basis of gastrointestinal disease as typified by Eggermont's excellent chapter on the biochemical basis of gastrointestinal intolerance to α -D-glucosides. The emphasis, however, remains upon the inter-relationship between nutrition and gastrointestinal disease with good accounts of the nutritional needs of the surgical neonate and the hepatic complications of total parenteral nutrition. This book is a valuable addition to the paediatric literature.

J A WALKER-SMITH

example, inflammatory bowel disease is not even mentioned in the list of contents; recourse to the index allows the four pages allotted to ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease to be located in the chapter entitled 'Disturbances of defaecation'. In contrast, out of the remaining seven chapters, one complete chapter is devoted to the 'Salivary glands', while another is set aside for 'Symptoms after gastric surgery'; the latter perhaps suggests an unduly gloomy view of the state of the art of surgery.

On the other hand, there are compensations: the text is thoughtful, literate, and logical, and the author demonstrates the art of writing for students with clarity but without condescension. Although short, the book is mercifully free of the 'you don't need to know about this at your stage' approach. It would be perverse to recommend this to students as a comprehensive text, but not only they but many of their mentors would benefit from reading it. As a complete tour of the alimentary tract, this book is a disappointment, but viewed as a voyage around Professor Hobsley it has much to offer.

DAVID WINGATE

News

Course in Gastroenterology

This course, to be held in Oxford, 9-12 January 1983, is designed for consultants and registrars, including those who do not specialise in gastroenterology. It will consist of selected topics which are of current interest in relation to the normal functioning of the digestive system and its diseases.

Further enquiries about the course should be addressed to: Dr D P Jewell, The John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford OX3 9DU. (Tel Oxford 64711).

Disorders of the digestive system By Michael Hobsley. (Pp. 178; illustrated: £5.25). London: Edward Arnold. 1982.

The idea of matching texts for preclinical and clinical students covering each system of the body is ingenious, and likely to induce some degree of brand loyalty to the fortunate publisher. Unfortunately, the idea is not matched by the execution, if this volume is a representative example. Although the title of the book suggests a comprehensive coverage of the subject, this is not what is contained between the covers. It is, rather, a surgeon's-eye view of gastroenterology. For