patients who have to have stomas often receive little attention and advice. Therefore it is timely that an edition of *Clinics in gastroenterology* should be devoted entirely to stomas and their care. The editors have planned their edition wisely and have produced a very attractive table of contents, including such important appendices as details about international ostomy associations and the list of manufacturers of ostomy aids.

When there are 23 contributors on a relatively small subject repetition is inevitable. There are 10 nurses or nurse/stoma therapists all contributing on minor variations of the main stoma theme and so repetition makes the nursing sections rather tedious, particularly if they are read consecutively. In general the chapters by the surgeons are better written and scientifically more valid than those by the nurses. I do not wish to appear carping or chauvinistic, but I was struck by this difference in almost all the sections. Presumably the surgeons have very much more experience in writing and in having their views criticised than do the nurses. Most of the nursing section are reminiscent of articles written for stoma association news letters rather than for scientific journals. In the section on the sexual implications of stoma surgery the first chapter by a surgeon is well written, sensitive and extremely helpful. The second section by a nurse/stoma therapist adds nothing to the preceding chapter and could well have been omitted. The nurses also present some information that, I feel needs editorial comment. One of the nurse/enterostomal therapists appears to recognise a stoma called a 'wet colostomy'. In this, one or both ureters is implanted into a colostomy. She says 'The colon then drains faeces and urine giving a liquid output; this produces problems in management such as leakage and odour'. One would hope that such stomas are never created anywhere in the world. If they are, the editors should have commissioned a special chapter telling surgeons which stomas should never be performed including 'wet colostomies'! I think that the editors should make it clear that whenever it is necessary to divert urine and colonic faeces, this must be done separately with a 'dry colostomy' and a separate urinary conduit with an everted stoma to which a urostomy appliance can be stuck.

In another chapter a nurse/stoma therapist tells us about squamous metaplasia, which is the encroachment of epithelial cells onto the stomal mucosa. She says that this condition resolves in the presence of antibiotics, but relapses when they are withdrawn. For severe metaplasia she says that 'penicillin 200-250 mg may be prescribed twice daily; once started this treatment must be continued

permanently'. I find this a fascinating concept and, if it is true, would be most interested to know the mechanisms involved. If there is published scientific evidence on this subject then the appropriate reference ought to be cited. On the other hand, if it is an unsubstantiated opinion, the editors should have insisted on this being made clear.

I have read and re-read sections of this book with great interest and profit. If I criticise it as being only good in parts, the good parts are very good and overall it is well worth buying.

JOHN ALEXANDER-WILLIAMS

Drugs and appetite Edited by T Silverstone. (Pp. 187; illustrated; £14.20). London: Academic Press. 1982.

I found this a useful little book, editorially tight, with a good team of 10 contributors. There is inevitably some artificiality in separating out the mechanisms of food intake and its regulation by drugs from the larger issue of energy balance and also the influence of such factors as food on intake. Nevertheless, within these clear limits the book contains excellent up-to-date reviews of research and concepts by Smith on the effect of food intake on feeding, and by Blundell on the behavioural pharmacological approach. The editor weighs in with excellent reviews of recent attempts to measure hunger in the human experiment and of the clinical pharmacology of appetite. Those interested in treating obesity with drugs will also value the cautionary and realistic chapter on this subject. Szmukler takes on the daunting task of reviewing the drug treatment possibilities for anorexia nervosa and does it competently. I was disappointed to learn that there is not yet a drug that is specific for the pathological desire to slim which seems to be at the heart of the condition!

The book is well-introduced and indexed, and provides some good bibliographies.

A H CRISP

Kidney disease: 3 Hepatorenal disorders By S P Wilkinson. (Pp. 208; illustrated; SFr98.) New York: Marcel Dekker, 1982.

The title of this book might encourage potential readers who are neither nephrologists nor hepatologists to hope that it might clear the fog surrounding the term 'hepatorenal syndrome'. The author does this by disposing of the term altogether and attempting to classify the cause and different types of renal failure seen in liver disease. Though this task is completely achieved, the murk remains,

especially when precise aetiological mechanisms are discussed. This is in no way the author's fault, as the literature clearly abounds in conflicting evidence, no doubt because of the involvement of very many factors and the resulting difficulty in study in truly comparable groups of patients.

The scope of the book is enlarged by considering, in the context of hepatic disease, the mechanism of sodium and water retention in ascites formation, other electrolyte disorders, renal tubular acidosis, and glomerulonephritis; there are also chapters on the treatment of renal failure and ascites.

The section on electrolyte disorders and tubular acidosis are really somewhat superficial. Much the best chapters are those on renal failure in liver disease and on the mechanism and treatment of fluid retention. This is hardly surprising as the author has made significant original contributions to knowledge in these areas.

Dr Wilkinson's book will be of interest to nephrologists and hepatologists, but is not likely to prove attractive to family practitioners or medical students as suggested in the publisher's press release.

R D COHEN

Epidemiology of Cancer of the Digestive Tract
Edited by P Corresa and W. Haerszel. (Pp. 264; illustrated; \$48). The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1982. As the title suggests, this book consists of eight reviews by a total of 14 authors of what is known of the epidemiology of the common gastrointestinal cancers including lymphoma. Like most books of this ilk, it is something of a curate's egg. The individual chapters on cancer of the oesophagus, liver, and large bowel are particularly good. No doubt this reflects the relevant authors' eminence in their respective fields as well as the fact that epidemiological studies have made a major contribution to understanding their aetiology. Unfortunately, other chapters are not of the same quality, and, possibly as a result of trying to be too comprehensive in their review of the literature, are difficult to digest.

It is hard to understand why nearly a fifth of the book is devoted to cancers of the gall bladder and biliary passages, especially when so relatively little is known of their epidemiology. In contrast, the chapter on gastric cancer is short, considering its importance. There are also two curious chapters that amount mainly to accounts of the authors' own work which seem out of place, considering one is devoted to a study of 26 cases of colon cancer in young people and the other is a review of gall-

bladder cancer in New Mexico.

It is not possible to unreservedly recommend this book. It is not easy reading. An introductory chapter assessing the various sources of data and the pitfalls in their interpretation would probably have been helpful to the reader unfamiliar with epidemiological terms and methods. Nevertheless, this book does collect together a lot of material and references that might not be available to most clinicians. It may therefore be of value to those gastroenterologists who – for example, when preparing a lecture wish to know something of the epidemiology of a particular cancer.

RICHARD F A LOGAN

News

Immunolabelling for Electron Microscopy

The first module in a new series of specialist short courses entitled 'Current advances in laboratory techniques' will be held at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School from 17–21 October 1983. Further details from Dr J M Polak, Department of Histochemistry, RPMS, Hammersmith Hospital, Du Cane Road, London W12 0HS.

International Meeting on Therapeutic Endoscopy

This meeting will be hosted by the Division of Gastroenterology, Wellesley Hospital, from 13–15 October 1983 at the King Edward Hotel, Toronto. Further information from Dr N E Marcon, 121 Jones Building, Wellesley Hospital, Toronto, Canada M4Y 1J3.

Novel Approaches and Drugs for the Treatment of Obesity

The Satellite Symposium of the Fourth International Congress of Obesity will be held from 3–5 October 1983 at The Sheraton Centre, 7th Avenue at 52nd Street, New York City. Further details from Dr Ann C Sullivan, Director, Department of Pharmacology, Hoffmann-La-Roche Inc, 340 Kingsland Street, Nutley, NJ, 07110, USA.

The British Digestive Foundation

The Foundation is delighted to report a magnificent bequest of £515 000 from the late Mr J H Waring. His express wish was that the money should be used to endow Fellowships in memory of his wife, Mrs Amelie Waring, for research into the prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment of pancreatitis.