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*Gut* publishes original papers and reviews concerned with practice and research in the field of gastroenterology. The field is that of alimentary, hepatic, or pancreatic disease, and papers may cover the medical, surgical, radiological, or historical aspects. They may also deal with the basic sciences concerned with the alimentary tract, including experimental work. A case report will be accepted only if it deals with a clinical problem which has been studied in detail and the resulting data provide material for further research.

**COMMUNICATIONS** Two copies of papers and figures should be addressed to the Editor, *Gut*, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR. Papers are accepted only on the written understanding, signed by all authors, that they are not published elsewhere without previous sanction of the Editorial Committee, and that all authors agree to publication in *Gut*. Manuscripts should follow the Vancouver conventions (see *Br Med J* 1979; 1: 532-5. *Gut* 1979; 20: 651-2). They should be in double-spaced typewriting on one side of the paper only. On the paper the name of the author should appear with initials (or distinguishing first name) only, and the name and address of the hospital or laboratory where the work was performed. A short summary should be provided at the beginning of the paper.

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**ETHICS** Ethical considerations will be taken into account in the assessment of papers (see the Medical Research Council's publications on the ethics of human experimentation, and the World Medical Association's code of ethics, known as the Declaration of Helsinki (see *Br Med J* 1964; 2:177)).

**SI UNITS** All measurements except blood pressure are expressed in SI units. In the text they should be followed by traditional units in parentheses. In tables and illustrations value are given in SI units, but a conversion factor must be supplied. For general guidance on the

International System of Units and some useful conversion factors, see *The SI for the Health Professions* (WHO, 1977). **NB: Such conversion is the responsibility of the author.**

**REFERENCES** These follow the Vancouver system - that is, references numbered consecutively in the text and listed numerically with titles abbreviated in the style of *Index Medicus, Standard journal article* - (list all authors when six or less; when seven or more, list first three and add *et al*): James A, Joyce B, Harvey T. Effect of long-term cimetidine. *Gut* 1979; 20: 123-4. **NB: Accurate punctuation is essential.**

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ISSN 0017-5749

Hague towards the end of the Second World War, a gruesome period of famine when the people were reduced to eating tulip bulbs and many died of starvation. To Dicke's astonishment, his coeliac patients improved under these appalling conditions. But it was the relapse induced by the bread dropped by airplanes sent by the Swedish authorities to relieve the starving population that convinced him that there was something in bread that caused coeliac disease. The most important technical advance of that era was the introduction by van der Kamer of his now classic method of measuring faecal fat, and it was this technique that enabled the Dutch workers to pinpoint the crucial role of gluten.

The volume is well produced and easy to handle. A number of errors, for example 'metabolic fat' and 'enteroporesis' have escaped the proof readers, particularly among the references. Nevertheless, the book is a useful monograph describing the Birmingham experience.

C C BOOTH

**Oesophageal manometry in clinical investigation** By R D Henderson. (Pp. 258; illustrated; £31.75.) New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983.

This book is the distillate of the author's experience of oesophageal disease as it has been illuminated by manometry. It has all the virtues of a personal view, describing his own findings enlivened by clinical anecdotes, especially where the published literature is confusing; it is also well referenced. Inevitably it also has the drawbacks of personal account, and these exemplify the problems which beset all oesophageal manometrists.

There is no universally agreed technique for performing pressure studies, so Dr Henderson describes his own. Unfortunately, much that has been learned recently about improving recording fidelity is not discussed. The virtues of non-compliant, low volume pumps are inadequately described, and the large volume syringe pump is recommended as having 'withstood the test of time'. The need for a radial array of catheters because of sphincter asymmetry, and Dent's sleeve catheter are not mentioned, while rapid pull through for sphincter measurements is dismissed in a short paragraph.

Observer error is a pitfall in manometry, and even with patience and excellent equipment it is often impossible to obtain neat, unambiguous recordings. Throughout this book the illustrative recordings are 'semi-diagrammatic', which makes for clear pictures but conceals the practical difficulties. How and where to make measurements on a tracing are quickly passed over, mainly contained in one complex figure (which does not agree with its

accompanying text), showing sphincter tone being related not to the gastric fundus but to oesophageal body pressure. This is either a serious graphical error, or Dr Henderson is out of tune with every other manometrist of my acquaintance.

The many clinical facets of oesophageal disorders are well described and illustrated with good radiographs as well as manometric traces, and the author's didacticism in areas of uncertainty is stimulating, if sometimes controversial.

There is a growing if belated interest in manometry among British gastroenterologists. Manometry is far from an indispensable aid but in a few patients it can give important information unobtainable in other ways, besides being essential as a research tool. There is a need for a guide to manometry but I fear this book is too idiosyncratic to be recommended for that purpose.

JOHN R BENNETT

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## Books received

**Journal of the American College of Nutrition** Vol 1, No 1 Edited by Mildred S Seelig. (Pp. 136; illustrated; \$83.00). New York: Liss, 1982.

**Cytopathology of parasitic disease** Ciba Foundation Symposium 99. (Pp. 273; illustrated; £25.00.) London: Pitman Books Ltd, 1983.

**World review of nutrition and dietetics. Nutrients and energy** Edited by G H Bourne. (Pp. 227; illustrated; \$118.75.) Basel, Switzerland: S Karger AG, 1983.

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## News

### BSG Research Award 1984

A three page summary of personal research work is invited by the Awards Committee who will recommend to Council the recipient of the Award for 1984. A bibliography may also be submitted if desired. The Award consists of a medal and £100 prize. Entrants must be 40 years or less (on 31 December 1984) but need not be a member of the BSG. All (or a substantial part) of the work must be performed in the UK or Eire. The recipient will be required to deliver a 40 minute lecture at the Plenary Session of the Spring meeting in 1985. Applications (six copies) should be made to: The Honorary Secretary, BSG, The Rayne Institute, 5 University Street, London WC1E 6JJ, by 1 December 1984.

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**Closing date for applications: 30 August 1984**

## ABC OF COMPUTING

A J ASBURY

Although computers are being widely used in medicine, their possibilities and limitations are still not clear to many potential users. This book, aimed at the non-expert, describes some of the uses of computers in medicine; because most doctors' involvement will be indirect, liaising with computer experts rather than designing systems themselves, the book concentrates on concepts rather than detailed descriptions of how computers work. It provides a useful introduction for the doctor who wants to know how computers can contribute to his practice of medicine.

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