

Book reviews

Inflammatory bowel diseases Edited by R N Allan, M R B Keighley, J Alexander-Williams, and C Hawkins. (Pp. 583; illustrated; price not stated) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1983.

Inflammatory bowel disease is the scourge of our speciality and must occupy the majority of our time and thought. A comprehensive encyclopaedia of these disorders will be welcomed by gastroenterologists everywhere. This book is a major reference source by four editors and 84 contributors in 68 chapters, truly an encyclopaedia. Every aspect of the diseases and their physiology, pathology, and treatment is encompassed; most in succinct and well-edited sections.

The major problem in such an undertaking is balance and at first I thought the diseases had been swamped by the peripheral aspects. But after going over it I was overcome with admiration for the scope and comprehensiveness. Not a book to sit down and read but a large volume to be on every gastroenterologist's bookshelf for reference. Nothing that I wanted to know has been omitted (though much that I would like to know is frankly admitted to be uncertain). It is good to have such a scholarly and complete book that should appeal to surgeons as much as physicians, and investigators, as well as those engaged in diagnostic procedures.

Most of the chapters have excellent conclusions, if these alone were read a splendid review of the subject is immediately at hand. The international cast of contributors are to be thanked and the editors congratulated on the distribution and lack of overlap. Certainly this is a work to be highly recommended.

B CREAMER

Peptic ulcer (Clinical surgery international, vol 7) Edited by D C Carter. (Pp. 219; illustrated; £19) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1983.

While some *Gut* readers may groan 'not another book on peptic ulcer', the professional ulcerologist will savour with relish this latest survey and add it to all the others on this topic on his shelves. Any general reader wishing to learn about peptic ulcer can safely pay his £19 and get his money's worth. Although the book comes in a series on clinical surgery there is nothing specifically surgical about the 14 chapters, only four of which are operative: vagotomy (Becker and Kelly), for duodenal ulcer (Jamieson), for gastric ulcer (Johnson), and long term sequelae of ulcer surgery (Cuschieri).

Naturally, David Carter's editorship guarantees a

choice of acknowledged experts writing authoritative chapters. There are few novelties, however, in epidemiology (Langman), acid-pepsin pathophysiology (Olbe), mucosal defences (O'Brien), medical management (Misiewicz), recurrent ulcer (Stabile and Passaro), endocrine syndromes (Joffe), and gastric cancer (Keane). Most of these authors have written similar chapters in similar books before.

I particularly enjoyed two chapters, both from Scotland, a country distinguished for its high annual incidence of duodenal ulcer and for the quantity and quality of its ulcerologists. Crean and Holden's 'Problem areas in diagnosis' not only describes their computer analysis of symptoms and causes of dyspepsia, but also critically compares and contrasts the successes and errors of single contrast and double contrast barium meals, with those of upper gastrointestinal endoscopy. Small admits that 'failure is not a popular subject', and then analyses the problems, their causes and their management ending his critique by reminding us that after operations from peptic ulcer 'the ultimate failure, premature death, is smoking-related and awaits the impact of health education'.

J H BARON

Current histopathology: vol 6 Atlas of gastrointestinal pathology as seen on biopsy By I M P Dawson (Pp. 158; illustrated; £34.95) Lancaster: MTP Press, 1983.

This atlas is for histopathologists and one of a comprehensive series covering all the body systems. Professor Dawson expresses the hope that he has produced a 'practical working bench book for those interpreting biopsies'. He has succeeded as our departmental copy is always open on the bench by the microscopes. Receiving a review copy eases the demand on our one volume.

The book has 21 chapters organised in the standard manner according to level in the gastrointestinal tract and basic pathology – for example, inflammatory, neoplastic, etc. Each chapter has up to three pages of text, and the photographs – six to a page – come between two pages of text or follow at the end of the chapter. A short list of pertinent references concludes each section. The picture captions are short, the information being in the text rather than below the illustrations as is the style of some atlas. Although it is an atlas of biopsy pathology, when relevant key macroscopic pictures are included.

In general the standard of illustration is good but there are a small number over which Professor