

Dawson should take up the cudgels against the publishers. The colour in these bears no relation to the standard red and blue of haematoxylin and eosin.

Most appealing is Professor Dawson's personal touch throughout the text. One is given his opinion and experiences, not an impersonal account of diseases common to most textbooks. The book by modern standards is not expensive and histopathologists aside I am sure it is of value to clinicians. A quick glance at the right picture and you are fully armed to argue the toss with your pathologist at the weeks gastrointestinal conference.

ASHLEY B PRICE

**Clinical reactions to food** Edited by Professor M H Lessof. (Pp. 222; illustrated; \$14.50.) Chichester: Wiley, 1983.

In recent years there has been growing interest in the role of specific foods in provoking disease. Despite the obvious importance of the gut in food reactions, gastroenterologists have not been prominent in this field, and most of the impetus has been provided by practitioners of fringe medicine whose claims of the importance of 'food allergy' have been so sweeping as to excite derision rather than to promote scientific research. Professor Lessof, therefore, is to be congratulated on producing the first book which objectively documents the known facts of the relationship between specific foods and diseases.

Perhaps the most interesting contributions include those on 'Food allergy in childhood' by Professor J F Soothill, and 'Reactions to foods in adults' by Professor Lessof himself. There are other, important contributions on 'Immunology and physiology of digestion' by Anne Ferguson and Stephan Strobel, and 'Coeliac disease, inflammatory bowel disease and food intolerance' by W T Cooke and G K T Holmes. It was perhaps unnecessary to include an article on the psychiatric aspects of eating, and it is unfortunate that the excellent contribution by Dr Moneret-Vautrin, which is probably the most important in the book in terms of understanding the mechanisms of these reactions, should have been entitled 'False food allergy', a term which has unfortunate connotations suggesting that such a food reaction is psychological.

In the years to come the attention of gastroenterologists will be drawn more and more to the problem of what their patients eat. This book makes an excellent introduction for those who wish to keep abreast of these problems.

J O HUNTER

**The digestive system** By R J Bolt, P E S Palmer, B H Ruebner, and D W Watson. (Pp. 429; illustrated; £22.50.) New York: John Wiley, 1983. This is a short soft backed book covering the whole of the alimentary tract, pancreas, and liver. It is clearly aimed at American undergraduate medical students. For the most part chapters are organ based and each begins with a description of the normal anatomy and function followed by a review of the methods of evaluating that organ by radiological, pathological, and other techniques. Finally, there are descriptions of diseases of the relevant organ in which an attempt is made to relate the disease and its manifestations to disorders of structure and function. These chapters are thus the result of a laudable effort to bring together the normal anatomy and physiology with clinical disease. Unfortunately, the final result is somewhat unbalanced and clinical aspects receive a rather superficial treatment compared with radiology for example. Thus there is rather more on Hirschsprung's disease than there is on Crohn's disease; the irritable bowel syndrome receives only a half a page of text; diseases of the anus and rectum are dealt with in one page, almost as much as Schatzky's ring receives. In parts the text is outdated and the references for background reading are often to old rather than new literature. There are a few errors. For example, tannic acid is suggested as being a useful adjunct to barium enema. Gastric ulcers are said to occur commonly at the junction of the pyloric and duodenal mucosa and pirenzepine is misspelt.

The book is clearly aimed at an undergraduate level in the United States. Postgraduates in the UK will find the clinical aspects dealt with too superficially for them.

L A TURNBERG

**Esophageal function in health and disease** Edited by Donald O Castell and L F Johnson. (Pp. 372; illustrated; \$32.50.) Barking, Essex: Applied Science Publishers, 1983.

The editors of this book are unnecessarily modest in the claims they make for it. They maintain that there is no need for a comprehensive new book on clinical disorders of the oesophagus, and that they have simply produced an account of oesophageal function aimed at clinicians. In my view the result has been a good book on oesophageal disease. Both editors are experts in the study of oesophageal function, a proper starting point for the discussion of an actively mobile organ, but its anatomy and structural disorders are comprehensively covered – for