included even though the journal is clearly aimed at clinicians.

Two choices then, to help the overworked clinician to keep up. My personal preference is for the American book, which gives the impression of being the distillation of a great deal of hard and critical work; it seems to me that the editors have found precisely the right balance between summarising the work of others, and seasoning it with their own opinions. On the other hand, *Current opinion* covers more ground (or will have done so within the year) for less money, but in less detail so that access to original sources in a library is still required. There is room for both of these in the market, and on the shelves of the moderately affluent.

DAVID WINGATE

Hormone producing tumours of the gastrointestinal tract Edited by S Cohen and R D Soloway. (Pp. 164; illustrated; £36.00.) New York, Edinburgh, London and Melbourne: Churchill Livingstone, 1985.

This volume, the fifth in the series *Contemporary issues in gastroenterology* contains eight chapters. After an introductory chapter on peptides of the gastrointestinal tract by Francesco Carlei, Stephen Bloom, and Julia Polak there are five chapters on individual types of hormone secreting tumour covering Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, glucagonoma, somatostatinoma, VIPoma and miscellaneous tumours. Finally there are chapters on chemotherapy and on the surgical approach to such tumours. There are signs of some laxity in editorial control, with variation in the form and content of the different chapters, and a degree of overlap in some areas, notably the management of Zollinger-Ellison syndrome. This can lead to confusion, as the approach to the patient with Zollinger-Ellison syndrome described in chapter 2 appears to differ from that described in chapter 8. The differences in the text are not helped by what appears to be a faulty flow chart in chapter 2 which suggests that if the primary tumour is not found at laparotomy it should then be excised conservatively. It is hard to judge exactly what has gone wrong, but probably the two main sections of the flow chart have somehow become interposed, with nonsensical results. This may be a printing error, as there are quite a lot of misprints scattered around in the book.

The introductory chapter is as excellent as its authors would lead us to expect, and is beautifully illustrated. One might quarrel with the authors' loyal defence of their continued use of the APUD cell concept and its unfortunate derivative term APUDoma, when many people are moving away from the use of these terms, recognising that

although they have had historical usefulness in drawing attention to the similarity of endocrine and other cells, the term is inaccurate and no longer as necessary or helpful as it was a few years ago.

It is a shame about the erroneous summary of suggested treatment for Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, as chapter 2 is otherwise both comprehensive and impressive. Those chapters on glucagonoma, somatostatinoma and VIPoma are all perfectly straightforward and good accounts of their topics. Chapter 6 is probably surplus to requirements in this book, not being concerned with particular tumour syndromes, and really repeating a lot of what is discussed elsewhere on endocrine cells and their tumours in general. It might perhaps have been better to use the space for other topics such as insulinoma or carcinoid tumours, both of which are so much commoner than other types of endocrine cell tumours of the gut. The chemotherapy chapter in fact only deals with insulinoma and carcinoid tumours, so these are covered at least from the point of view of chemotherapy, although other endocrine tumours are not. Similarly the chapter on the surgical approach deals more with insulinomas and carcinoid tumours than with others.

Gastrointestinal endocrinology is a curious subject. It is fascinating and still advancing rapidly, so books such as this are helpful in keeping the clinicians, at whom it is aimed, up to date. The vast majority of clinicians, however, are unlikely to have to deal with more than a handful of patients suffering from conditions described in it during the whole of their working lifetime. Overall this is a well written and well produced volume, but I think it is another one to refer to in the library rather than to buy it for one's own collection.

RICHARD F HARVEY

Current topics in nutrition and disease: vol 12. Absorption and malabsorption of mineral nutrients Edited by Noel W Solomons and Irwin H Rosenberg. (Pp 212; illustrated; £50.) New York: Alan R Liss, 1984.

This book comprises individual chapters on the 'major' minerals (calcium, magnesium, iron) and some trace minerals (zinc, copper, selenium, chromium), with a final chapter devoted to manganese and the 'ultratrace' minerals (molybdenum, vanadium, nickel, silicon, arsenic). Each mineral is allocated space on the basis of what is known about it with the exception of zinc, which is covered in excessive detail.

There is no doubt that books like this fulfil a useful role by gathering together information on a circumscribed topic. Some of the chapters are good, notably that on iron. The book is not, however, a

good example of the genre. In part this reflects the often serious lack of knowledge about mineral absorption. More importantly, it is because, in general, authors have not been prepared to review their subject, merely to catalogue progress. It is also because the editors seem to have done little editing. Thus, for example, each chapter includes a sometimes laborious description of the techniques for measuring absorption. As in general, these do not differ between minerals, it might have been more appropriate to include an opening chapter on this topic rather than the one offered by the editors on 'physiological and pathological mechanisms in mineral absorption' which says very little. It is perhaps not surprising that the lengthy chapter on zinc is written by one of the editors. Finally, the publishers are not blameless. From the references it is clear that most chapters were written in 1982. The book was sent to *Gut* for review in January 1985. Why does it take two years to publish a book?

MAYNARD CASE

Integrated clinical science – gastroenterology By P F Jones, P W Brunt, and N A G Mowat. (Pp 365; illustrated; £12.50.) London: Heinemann, 1985.

This has to be the best illustrated short text book of gastroenterology. If you need to make teaching slides, the hundreds of line drawings are absolutely ideal. The book is a very reasonable price for its 365 pages, but with so many illustrations the text is necessarily short. It is written for the 'interested' final year student, or as core reading for the membership or fellowship candidate. I think the book succeeds, and it can be strongly recommended for these 'non-gastroenterologists'.

R E POUNDER

Coloproctology and the pelvic floor Edited by M Henry and M Swash. (Pp 407; illustrated; price not stated.) London: Butterworths, 1985.

Although the title sounds rather like that of a romantic novel and is literally enigmatic, this is a timely book. The important parts of the book are the sections dealing with the methods of assessment of the patients presenting with pelvic floor abnormalities; these sections, written by the two editors, are particularly valuable.

The general standard of printing and reproduction of the illustrations is a weak point of the book. Many of the illustrations have been borrowed from other articles and textbooks written by the chapter authors. Some of these have reproduced well but many of the halftone drawings look indistinct and cheap. The radiograph reproduction and even the black and white histological reproductions of muscle fibres look good but the overall appearance of the

work suffers from the lack of a 'housestyle' of the illustrations. It is difficult to believe that anyone asked to write a chapter on the anatomy of anus sphincters and pelvic floor could do so with the use of only one crude figure and 115 references; 30 figures and 30 references would have been a better proportion. One has the impression that the production of the book was somewhat hurried to meet the deadline of the 150th anniversary celebrations of St Mark's Hospital. With more time and attention to graphic detail this book might well have become a classic. I expect that it will sell well particularly at the meeting.

J ALEXANDER-WILLIAMS

Case presentations in gastrointestinal disease

Edited by W D W Rees, S Hughes, J L Shaffer, and G R Barclay. (Pp 201; illustrated; £6.95.) London: Butterworths, 1985.

The book is in two parts: 60 case presentations with questions and answers, followed by eight short review articles.

The case presentations are a great success. They cover most gastrointestinal problems and are written in an interesting, light style. A few questions are asked the 'examiner' with model answers provided later in the book. It is a pity that these answers are not shuffled, as it is almost impossible not to cheat. Perhaps the reader should start at case 60 and work backwards. The answers allow the authors to discuss the up to date differential diagnosis, management and treatment of each condition.

The eight review articles seem out of place – they only discuss a few aspects of gastroenterology which could have been covered by another 20 case presentations in the same space.

Gastroenterologists will find the book quite unlike outpatients: 59 organic problems and only one patient with an irritable bowel! A pleasure to read, which may help their teaching.

R E POUNDER

Books received

Radiology cumulative index 1978–1982 Edited by William R Eyler. (Pp. 688; not illustrated; no price stated.) Illinois: Radiological Society of North America, 1983.

Vagotomy in modern surgical practice Edited by J H Baron, J Alexander-Williams, M Allgower, C Muller, and J Spencer. (Pp. 378; illustrated; £38.00.) Sevenoaks, Kent: Butterworth Group, 1982.