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Books

Abdominal stomas – indications, operative technique and patients care By J S Abrams. (Pp 191; illustrated; £35.00.) Boston: John Wright, 1984.

This is an excellent if somewhat expensive little book with 60 clear, colour illustrations. It has, however, some of the most appalling line drawings that I have seen in any textbook from west of the iron curtain. A lot of thought has gone into the production of the text. It is a great pity that as much thought did not go into the selection and production of the illustrations. Some of the early illustrations are naively simple with anatomical details that are reminiscent of the words of the song 'The thigh bone is connected to the hip bone'! The book is extensively illustrated with amateurish line drawings by Mr T S Quinn. There is a certain attraction in the drawings of an enthusiastic amateur but it is difficult to forgive the appalling reproduction. The publishers John Wright say that the book was printed in the United States of America. It certainly does not live up to the standard that one would expect from that country. Not only are the line drawings tiny and indistinct but the print type used for the Tables has an old fashioned look about it. Some of the choices of illustration are so poor as to be laughable; the biggest laugh of the book comes on page 115 in which the whole page is taken up by a sexy, sultry,

nude tailors-model sitting uncomfortably on a hospital wc about to start colostomy irrigation. The model's expression and pose are so provocative that the reader cannot resist drawing a balloon coming out of the models mouth and adding his or her amusing caption.

Having been scathing about the illustrations let me hasten to redress the balance by praising the wisdom of the practical tips to occasional stoma surgeons and to stoma therapy nurses. All of these will read this book with profit.

There are certain surprising omissions. There is relatively little about continent ileostomies and nothing about continent colostomies, not even condemnation. There is far too little about the physiology of colonic irrigation or about the physiological effects of the continent nipple valve ileostomy.

I suspect that the book has been a long time in gestation. In a short addendum at the end of the book there are cryptic references to 'modern advances' such as perineal pouches with ileoanal anastomoses and stomahesive rings replacing karaya gum. These 'addenda' suggesting that the manuscript of the book was finished at least five years ago.

Having picked it up and browsed through it at a book stall, I do not think I would spend £35 to buy it, but I would suggest to my stoma therapist that we included it in the gastroenterological unit library.

J ALEXANDER-WILLIAMS

Controversies in gastroenterology Edited by G. Gitnick. (Pp 276; illustrated; £25.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1984.

It is always refreshing to look at a medical book which is in no sense a textbook. *Controversies in Gastroenterology* certainly does not come into this category. It consists of debate by experts concerning areas of gastroenterology where there are differing opinions about the correct therapy or mode of investigation necessary for patients with a variety of gastrointestinal disorders. The contributors are all distinguished American clinicians – though one is from industry – and the editor is Gary Gitnick, Professor of Medicine UCLA.

The topics that have been chosen for debate include aspects of the treatment of Crohn's disease, alcoholic hepatitis, chronic hepatitis B, pancreatitis, the place of endoscopy in intestinal bleeding, immunisation of needle stick patients with hepatitis B immune globulin, perioperative nutritional support, etc – 10 in all. In each case the therapeutic manoeuvre or investigation is first supported and then attacked by two different clinicians, and a