casting view is expressed by the editor. The clinicians chosen have a particular interest in and experience of the subject under debate, and their own contributions to the literature feature heavily in the useful and extensive bibliography.

The accounts make interesting reading and give an excellent background to each topic. As the book has 270 pages and only 10 subjects are discussed it must be obvious that each is addressed in some depth. For this reason the comments of the moderator are valuable. There are no real surprises, except that is perhaps the choice of some of the original subjects for discussion. I would have thought, for example, that the problem concerning whether 6 mercaptopurine should be used in Crohn's disease could be summed up as 'rarely', and that 46 pages of argument for and against are unlikely to have much impression on the gastroenterologist who looks after a difficult case of Crohn's disease. The point of this book, however, is that it does allow one to see how well-founded or otherwise are the claims for the effectiveness of one treatment or the advisability of a particular investigation. In this respect the book should be widely read, though many volumes would be required to deal with the multitude of gastrointestinal enigmas that face us. In summary – a useful book if you are interested in the 10 topics that it covers – and important if you are working in these fields.

A E READ

Gastrointestinal tract disorders in the elderly Edited by J Hellemans and G Vantrappen. (Pp. 278; illustrated; £20.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1984.

I found this an enjoyable and readable review of 16 different aspects of gastrointestinal disorders in the elderly. An attempt has been made to discuss disease presentation against a background of age changes in the gastrointestinal tract. Differences between the elderly and younger age groups are reviewed. An up to date assessment has been made of current knowledge (or lack of it) of anatomy and physiology.

There is an excellent introductory chapter on evaluation of GI symptoms in the elderly. Up to date and helpful discussions follow on 'Functional and histological gastric changes', 'Malabsorption', 'Faecal incontinence', 'The acute abdomen', 'Polyps and tumours of the large intestine', and 'Pancreatic disease'. I found the sections relating to the oesophagus, peptic ulcer, diverticular disease, and hepatobiliary disorder, a little disappointing. I was hoping for more practical guidance on differential diagnosis and management of major problems – for

example, acute GI bleeding and oesophageal stricture.

The management of gall stones was well described with a sensible review of ERCP and endoscopic papillotomy. The importance of gall stones as a treatable and common cause of jaundice, however, was under stressed. The assessment of jaundice as a presenting sign could have been more fully discussed.

I would have liked to have seen more on anti-inflammatory drugs and peptic ulcer, malignant change in the stomach, iron deficiency anaemia, and occult GI bleeding, and the effect of age on liver function and less on diverticular disease, and oesophageal function.

Overall, the book succeeds in being short, informative and readable. It will be of interest to both geriatricians and gastroenterologists. It may, however, be a little over priced at £20.

J R CROCKER

News

Leeds Course in Clinical Nutrition

To be held at the Department of Medicine, St James's University Hospital, Leeds from 3–6 September 1985. Details from Mr T D Bilham, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT. Tel: 0532–431751, Ext. 7236.

XIIth Congress of the European Society for Artificial Organs (ESAO)

The 12th Congress of the European Society for Artificial Organs (ESAO) will take place in Athens between 16 and 19 September 1985. In conjunction with this symposium a pre-congress meeting to the IDF-Congress, concerning the artificial endocrine pancreas, insulin delivery devices, pancreas and islet transplantation will also be held. For further information Professor S Raptis, MD, PO Box 14127, 11510 Athens, Greece.

Annual Joint Scientific Meeting

The American Pancreatic Association and the National Pancreatic Cancer Project of the Organ Systems Coordinating Center will hold a joint meeting on 7 and 8 November 1985 at the Ambassador West Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, USA. Information from Dr Vay Liang W Go, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, 55905, USA.