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Gut publishes original papers and reviews concerned with practice and research in the field of gastroenterology. The field is that of alimentary, hepatic, or pancreatic disease, and papers may cover the medical, surgical, radiological, or historical aspects. They may also deal with the basic sciences concerned with the alimentary tract, including experimental work. A case report will be accepted only if it deals with a clinical problem which has been studied in detail and the resulting data provide material for further research. Letters dealing with matters arising from articles published in *Gut*, or with topics of general professional interest are encouraged, but the correspondence column should not be used for publication of original data.

COMMUNICATIONS Two copies of papers and figures should be addressed to the Editor, *Gut*, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR. Papers are accepted only on the written understanding, signed by all authors, that they are not published elsewhere without previous sanction of the Editorial Committee, and that all authors agree to publication in *Gut*. Manuscripts should follow the Vancouver conventions (see *Br Med J* 1979; 1: 532-5. *Gut* 1979; 20: 651-2). They should be in double-spaced typewriting on one side of the paper only. On the paper the name of the author should appear with initials (or distinguishing first name) only, and the name and address of the hospital or laboratory where the work was performed. A short summary should be provided at the beginning of the paper.

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ETHICS Ethical considerations will be taken into account in the assessment of papers (see the Medical Research Council's publications on the ethics of human experimentation, and the World Medical Association's code of ethics, known as the Declaration of Helsinki (see *Br Med J* 1964; 2:177)).

SI UNITS All measurements except blood pressure are expressed in SI units. In the text they should be followed

by traditional units in parentheses. In tables and illustrations value are given in SI units, but a conversion factor must be supplied. For general guidance on the International System of Units and some useful conversion factors, see *The SI for the Health Professions* (WHO, 1977). **NB: Such conversion is the responsibility of the author.**

REFERENCES These follow the Vancouver system, — that is, references numbered consecutively in the text and listed numerically with titles abbreviated in the style of *Index Medicus, Standard journal article* — (list all authors when six or less; when seven or more, list first three and add *et al*): James A, Joyce B, Harvey T. Effect of long-term cimetidine. *Gut* 1979; 20: 123-4. **NB: Accurate punctuation is essential.**

CORRECTIONS other than printers' errors may be charged to the author.

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Forthcoming Scientific Meetings of the British Society of Gastroenterology

Newcastle-upon-Tyne 18-20 September 1985

Lancaster 9-11 April 1986

Cardiff 24-26 September 1986

London 15-18 September 1987

*For details of registration please contact: The Administrative Secretary,
British Society of Gastroenterology, Rayne Institute, 5 University
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Tel: 01-387-3534 (International 44-1-387-3534).

and readable. The introduction by A Silberberg sets the scene by defining what is known and not known about mucus structure and function. The following five chapters are concerned with regulation of mucus secretion and provide interesting information on the factors which may control output by the various cell types of respiratory and intestinal mucosa. The remaining nine chapters are devoted to mucus structure and function, mechanisms of mucus secretion and gel formation, and role of the non-glycoprotein components of mucus in gel formation. Each chapter is concise with up to date references and where relevant, good quality illustrations. The discussions that follow individual chapters are extremely valuable and help the reader analyse more critically the content of each chapter. It will soon become apparent to the reader that there is still considerable controversy about the basic structure of mucus gel let alone its control mechanisms and functional significance.

As with most symposium publications, the quality and originality of the results are quite variable. Nevertheless this book will prove invaluable to those interested in mucus research and to those clinicians who deal with patients with abnormal mucus function.

W D W REES

Esophageal and gastric emptying Edited by A Dubois and D O Castell. (Pp. 159; illustrated; \$78.00.) Boca Baton, Florida: CRC Press Inc, 1984. This book provides a good review of the state of knowledge about oesophageal and gastric emptying in man. It evolved from a North American meeting on the subject in 1982, and the 15 authors cover physiological mechanisms, methods of measurement and the disorders that these methods have uncovered. Although more comprehensive reviews on some specific points are available elsewhere in various books and journals, this book achieves a concise but comprehensive and balanced overview which fulfils the editors' intention to provide an introduction to the subject for the young clinical investigator and assist the basic scientist seeking to relate his observations to disorders of the upper gastrointestinal tract. Indeed, it meets these two requirements very satisfactorily.

The book is of lesser value to the working clinician. A depressing aspect of research in this field, which the book reflects, is that investigators have so far failed to grapple with many simple questions of direct clinical significance. Which patients should undergo specific tests of oesophageal clearance or measurements of gastric emptying? Which abnormalities have direct relevance to diagnosis or therapy? These questions

should be tackled, difficult though they are. The young investigator will find this book worth reading for not only does it tell him what is known, but by omission, shows him where research is now required.

R C HEADING

Mechanisms of intestinal electrolyte transport and regulation by calcium Edited by M Donowitz and G W G Sharp. (Pp 388; illustrated; £60.) New York, USA: Alan R. Liss, 1984.

This volume is a collection of reviews presented at a Kroc Foundation Symposium in September 1983.

Most of the 21 chapters can be divided into three groups: (i) reviews of intestinal transport mechanisms, with emphasis on vesicle studies and colonic transport but with little or no reference to the role of Ca^{2+} ; (ii) reviews of cell calcium homeostasis and measurement, with no reference to the intestine; and (iii) reviews of cellular regulation of intestinal transport processes, with emphasis on Ca^{2+} .

Therefore, while there is no doubt that most chapters in the first two groups are well written by respected authorities, it is only in the third group of chapters that their authors seriously address topics suggested by the title of the book.

It makes sense to bring together at a symposium experts from different, but converging, fields and allow them to interact. I'm sure they did. But the reader of this book cannot benefit from such interaction as none of it is recorded. Thus, what might have been an excellent format for a conference is not very effective as a book. Editors must edit. They have not done so here. What they have done is contribute three chapters to the book. All are excellent. Two of them are central to what should have been the theme of the book. The other is not – but is an interesting review of drug therapy in diarrhoeal diseases.

MAYNARD CASE

Books received

Long cases in general medicine Edited by R E Pounder. (Pp. 234; not illustrated; no price stated.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1983.

Neodymium-Yag laser in medicine and surgery Edited by S N Joffe. (Pp. 282; illustrated; \$50.00.) Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishing Co, 1983.

Dictionnaire d'informatique. Anglais Francais 7th ed By M Ginguay. (Pp. 264; not illustrated; Ff.113.) Paris, France: Masson Editeur, 1983.

Annual research reviews. Substance P Vol 3 By Petr Skrabanek and David Powell. (Pp. 184; not illustrated; £30.25.) London: Eurospan Ltd, 1983.

Annual research reviews. Effects of hormones, drugs and chemicals on testicular function Vol 2 By A C Davies. (Pp. 215; not illustrated; £29.25.) London: Eurospan Ltd, 1983.

Annual research reviews. Hypothalamo-pituitary control of the ovary Vol 3 By J S M Hutchinson. (Pp. 213; not illustrated; £33.25.) London: Eurospan Ltd, 1983.

A clinical approach to progress in infectious diseases Edited by W Brunfitt and J M T Hamilton-Miller. (Pp. 163; illustrated; £12.50.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Royal Society of New Zealand Bulletin 20. Fibre in human and animal nutrition Edited by G Wallace and L Bell. (Pp. 249; illustrated; \$25.00.) Wellington: Royal Society of New Zealand, 1983.

Acute pancreatitis. An interdisciplinary synopsis Edited by Hollender, Lehnert and Wanke. (Pp. 156; illustrated; £28.) London: Pitman Publishing Limited, 1984.

Actualities digestives medico chirurgicales Edited by J Mouiel. (Pp. 230; illustrated; price not stated.) Paris: Masson Editeur, 1984.

Colo-proctologie Edited by J Soullard and J F Contou. (Pp. 473; illustrated; price not stated.) Paris: Masson Editeur, 1984

Disorders of the oesophagus. Advances and controversies Edited by A Watson and L R Celestin. (Pp. 298; illustrated; £25.) London: Pitman, 1984.

Key references in gastroenterology. An annotated guide By McPhee, Richter, and Klingenstein. (Pp. 121; not illustrated; £9.95.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1983.

Home parenteral nutrition Edited by Ivan D A Johnston. (Pp. 83; illustrated; £6.95.) Lancaster: MTP Press Ltd, 1983.

Regulatory processes in clinical endocrinology Edited by Walter B Essman. (Pp. 171; illustrated; £23.25.) Lancaster: MTP Press Ltd, 1983.

Variceal bleeding Edited by D Westaby, B R D Macdougall, and Roger Williams. (Pp. 256; illustrated; £25.00.) London: Pitman Books Ltd, 1983.

Peptic ulcer disease. Advances in pathogenesis and treatment By G Bianchi Porro and K D Bardhan. (Pp. 171; illustrated; no price stated.) New York: Raven Press, 1982.

News

Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery

An advanced course in the above will be held at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, London, on 4-8 November 1985. Details from the School Office (SSC), RPMS, Ducane Road, London W12 0HS.

Colorectal Cancer Group

The inaugural meeting will be held at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School at Hammersmith Hospital, on 29 November 1985. Information: Mr T. Cooke, Dept Surgery, Charing Cross Medical School, Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8RF, or Prof N. Wright, Dept Histopathology, RPMS, Ducane Road, London W12 0HS.

Hong Kong International Endoscopy Symposium

There will be a two day symposium on 7 and 8 December 1985 in the Sheraton Hotel, Hong Kong. Further details can be obtained from Dr Joseph Leung, Department of Medicine, Prince of Wales Hospital, Shatin, Hong Kong.

St Mark's Hospital: 150th anniversary

The highlight of the 1985 celebrations for the 150th Anniversary at St Mark's Hospital was a three day scientific meeting held at the Barbican in London. This was attended by 1295 delegates from 45 countries. An appeal to improve teaching, research, and patient care facilities at the hospital has been launched: further information is obtainable from the Appeal Committee, St Mark's Hospital, City Road, London EC1V 2PS.

Correction

Maintenance therapy: a two year comparison . . . Morgan, Pacsoo, McAdam (*Gut* 1985; **26**: 599-602). In the Methods section on page 599 'bismuth subcitrate' should read 'bismuth subnitrate'.

CONGRESS

The Ninth Ain Shams Medical Congress organized by the Faculty of Medicine, Ain Shams University, Cairo, to be held at the Faculty in Cairo, March 1-6, 1986. Its main theme will be "The Digestive System in Health and Disease".

Other medical subjects will also be presented as Free Communications. Doctors interested in gastroenterology as well as other subjects are cordially invited to participate. Many social and cultural activities will be available including tours to fascinating historical attractions and museums, Nile Cruises, and post conference tours to Upper Egypt and Sinai.

For requests for application forms and first announcement please contact.

Professor Soheir Sheir,
Prof of Internal Medicine,
Organising Secretary

Ninth Annual Ain Shams Medical Congress



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ABC OF COMPUTING

A J ASBURY

Although computers are being widely used in medicine, their possibilities and limitations are still not clear to many potential users. This book, aimed at the non-expert, describes some of the uses of computers in medicine; because most doctors' involvement will be indirect, liaising with computer experts rather than designing systems themselves, the book concentrates on concepts rather than detailed descriptions of how computers work. It provides a useful introduction for the doctor who wants to know how computers can contribute to his practice of medicine.

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