It is also concerned with the role of food in the
genesis of some of the digestive diseases. There is
now an extensive literature on food factors in
relation to gall stones, certain liver diseases, Crohn’s
disease and to cancers of the alimentary tract;
already a number of tentative conclusions have been
reached and these are critically reviewed and
assessed. The special interest of the authors in
functional bowel disorders and its relation to food is
well covered in the sections on allergy, pseudo-
allergy and pharmacologically active peptides,
either present in food or produced during digestion.
The personal experience of the authors in relation to
the irritable bowel syndrome is recorded but their
excellent results from exclusion diets await con-
firmation as it is a condition in which significant
regional differences could well exist. The rapidly
increasing interest in nutritional assessment in hos-
pital practice is covered together with a detailed
commentary on parenteral feeding but there is
insufficient reference to enteral feeding. An in-
creasingly active interest is being taken by many
gastroenterologists in clinical nutrition and indeed
the title of some departments has been changed to
Department of Gastroenterology and Nutrition.
This informative book will encourage this trend and
should be in every departmental library.

FRANCIS AVERY JONES

Polypoid disease of the colon: emphasis on radiologic
evaluation Edited by D J Ott and W C Wu. (Pp. 202;
illustrated; £42). Baltimore-Munich: Urban &
Schwarzenberg, 1986.
Colorectal polyps, their detection and management,
is a topical subject. In this book the authors seek to
review the subject, primarily for radiologists, by
providing a background of the pathological, clinical,
endoscopic, and surgical aspects, with emphasis
given to radiological techniques, diagnosis, and an
audit of efficacy.

As the book has seven authors, some overlap of
information is to be expected; the definition and
classification of polyps proving somewhat irris-
tible. The radiological chapters on technique, diag-
nosis and efficacy are authoratively written, clear,
and well illustrated. They provide a much more
detailed account than would be found in a general
textbook of radiology.

The chapter on the pathology of colorectal polyps
quotes widely from the work of Morson, but in
keeping with American practice talks about carcino-
ma in situ, which may cause confusion to British
readers, and does not help clarify the concept of a
‘malignant polyp’. It is surprising that this is not
discussed in greater detail, and there is only a brief
paragraph on its endoscopic implications in the
chapter on endoscopic evaluation. Staging of co-
lorectal malignancy is not discussed and there is no
mention of the Dukes’ or Astler-Coller systems,
which are central to an understanding of the
management of neoplasia.

The book should be judged on how it integrates
all the general pathological and clinical information
about polyps for the radiologist, however, who is the
intended reader, rather than whether it provides
sufficient detail for everyone. In this regard it
succeeds, especially from an American viewpoint. I
would have preferred a more definite commitment
to the single stage double contrast barium enema,
but the arguments have been fairly put. It is a useful
and readable work, providing a practical insight and
is recommended for departmental libraries.

C I BARTRUM

Nutrition, aging, and health By Eleanor A. Young
(Pp. 292; illustrated; £42) New York: Alan R Liss,
1986.

I found this a difficult book to enjoy. I am uncertain
at which market the book is aimed. There are 10
chapters on too wide a range of subjects grouped
under the general heading – ‘Nutrition, aging, and
health’. I felt in many cases that this relationship
was rather contrived without a strong central theme.
There are some sections which may be of interest
to geriatricians, but few I feel, which will be relevant
to general physicians and gastroenterologists. The text
is littered with unproven statements and unqualified
references of the value of various therapies.

The opening chapter on nutrition and physiology
of aging, does not distinguish between the physio-
logy of fit elderly and sick elderly subjects. Herein
lies the ‘age old’ problem in gerontological research.
Further there is no discussion on the misleading
comparison of cross sectional and longitudinal data.
Finally, no mention is made on the contribution that
fitness makes to physiological change.

There is a good chapter on assessing the nu-
tritional status of the elderly, although caution must
be exercised in transposing American data to United
Kingdom subjects. The section on nutritional re-
quirements gets bogged down with details of indi-
vidual vitamins without tackling the largely
psychosocial reasons for poor intake. The aged
gastrointestinal tract is well dealt with although I
would have liked to have read more on hepatic
metabolism. There are interesting sections on im-
munology and diabetes, but I was bewildered by
mineral metabolism. The final chapter deals with
the role of nutritional support for the elderly
patient. Unfortunately, the key issue is again
ducked. Is malnutrition a primary risk factor or
merely a marker of ill-health? No evidence is