

of ampicillin with tobramycin. There are contributions on the coagulopathy, antidotes to specific hepatotoxins such as paracetamol and the disturbances in amino acid metabolism. Oral and intravenous branch chain supplements have not lived up to early expectations. There is a fine chapter on the management of bleeding oesophageal varices based on the experience of the Barcelona liver unit but ascites gets little attention.

Finally the quest for the elusive artificial liver is brought up to date. Chang from McGill University who has done so much pioneering work in this field reviews the various systems of liver support and their experimental evaluation. The King's College Hospital experience of charcoal haemoperfusion, especially if this is started when the patient is still in grade three coma, is encouraging and the survival rate is much better than that of historical controls on series from other centres. They present evidence that the procedure may prevent the development of cerebral odema. Undoubtedly the best results of treatment do come from centres such as the Liver Failure Unit at King's where there is an experienced medical and nursing team.

Dr Roger Williams and his coauthors have produced a comprehensive and readable account of a complex subject and this book can be warmly recommended to all physicians dealing with patients with liver disease.

IAIN M MURRAY-LYON

**Computed tomography of the gastrointestinal tract including the peritoneal cavity and mesentery**  
Edited by M A Meyers. (Pp. 279; illustrated; DM248) Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1986.

When computed tomography (CT) was first introduced, the solid intra-abdominal organs received almost undivided attention. The pancreas, liver, spleen, kidneys, and lymph nodes were extensively studied, the axial anatomy defined and the appearance of various pathologies were described in great detail. Hollow organ gastroenterology, the mesenteric cavities, the omentum and mesentery were considered only in passing, but quite shortly thereafter the diagnosis of mesenteric cysts and pseudocysts and of peritoneal abscesses gained prominence.

Later CT was applied to demonstrating the fascial planes particularly of the retroperitoneum, the various peritoneal cavities and recesses and to the mesentery and omentum. Now the oesophagus, stomach, small bowel, and colon also receive considerable attention. In some centres even to the extent of recommending CT as the first line of investigation in diverticular disease. The arguments in favour are by no means as fanciful as may initially

appear. The complications of diverticular disease, bowel wall thickening, pericolic inflammation, abscess and fistula are well demonstrated. Furthermore CT is considerably more acceptable and less 'invasive' than a barium enema particularly in the elderly and is also more informative. A similar case can be made for diagnosing appendicitis or the complications of inflammatory bowel disease, not to mention tumours such as lymphoma and leiomyoma.

The expanded view of CT in gastrointestinal diagnosis is expertly presented in this book by world authorities who in the past have contributed greatly to our understanding of conventional radiology. This well written account, excellently illustrated and well presented can be recommended without reservation not only to radiologists but equally to surgeons and physicians interested in the gut. Sadly most NHS patients are still denied this facility and one wonders when District General Hospitals, let alone Teaching Hospitals, in this country will have immediate access to computed tomography and in particular for gastrointestinal tract disease.

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## Books received

**Motility: a forgotten factor in gastrointestinal disorders?**  
Edited by C Wood. (Pp. 39; illustrated; £7.50.) London: Royal Society of Medicine, 1985.

**Tropical disease research** 7th prog report by World Health Organisation. (Pp. 14/10; illustrated; Sw fr 45.) Geneva: WHO, 1985.

**Echographie du foie et des voies biliares** Edited by Andre Charbonnier. (Pp. 144; illustrated; FF96.) Paris: Masson, 1985.

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## News

**International Conference on Endotoxins II**

This conference will be held in Amsterdam from 21–23 May, 1987. Further details from: Scientific Secretary, ICEA II, Dr A Sturk, Academic Medical Center, F4-209, 1105 AZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tel: (20) 5665976.

**International Symposium on Immunology of the GI Tract and Liver**

This symposium will be held at Laromme Hotel, Jerusalem, Israel from 22–27 March, 1987. Further details from: Symposium Secretariat International Ltd, 12 Shlomzion Hamalka St, Jerusalem, 94146, Israel.