

**Portal hypertensive gastric mucosa**

SIR.—We read with keen interest the paper by Papazian *et al* (*Gut* 1986; 27: 1199–2030) and would like to report our experience and comments. During a three year period from March 1984 to March 1987, we have studied 118 cases of portal hypertension. These included 58 cases of cirrhosis, 32 of extra-hepatic portal obstruction and 28 of non-cirrhotic portal fibrosis. The aetiology of cirrhosis was alcohol in 30, hepatitis B in eight, Budd-Chiari syndrome in two, secondary biliary cirrhosis in two and cryptogenic in 14. In only two of these cases the gastric mucosal pattern described by the authors was seen. Both these patients had HBsAg positive cirrhosis and had accompanying duodenal ulcers. Apart from the mosaic pattern seen in these two, 28 other patients had gastric mucosal changes in the form of erosive gastritis, equally divided among the three groups of portal hypertensives. All of our patients had oesophageal and/or gastric varices.

The authors have not explained the possible causes of localisation of the mucosal changes. Were the changes more extensive in patients with a higher grade of varices? It would also be pertinent to know whether the same observer looked for the varices and the mucosal changes as it might have introduced an inherent bias in the study. In our experience the association of the mosaic pattern with duodenal ulcer would also raise the possibility of these changes being a part of the peptic ulcer disease. We plan to prospectively evaluate another hundred of such cases and take mucosal biopsies in both the subgroups – that is, those with and without associated acid peptic disease.

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book should act as a stimulus to further research into the areas covered; in some they have been successful but in others the cutting edge does not seem to have been reached.

The book is divided into four sections which are concerned with mucosal immunity and antigen handling, host dysfunction, liver disease, and gastrointestinal infection. Most topics are covered but there are some notable exceptions: *Giardia lamblia* is the only parasite considered and intestinal autoimmunity is only mentioned in passing. The sections on host defences and the immunology of liver disease are good and provide up-to-date summaries of important topics though the choice of topics in liver disease is somewhat idiosyncratic. The first and last sections, however, on mucosal immunity and gastrointestinal infection are rather more variable with chapters that are competent and comprehensive to others which are sketchy and disappointing. Perhaps more unforgivable are the chapters concerning antigen handling for which one has a distinct sense of *deja vu*. In the last section some chapters particularly that on Clostridial infections whilst being well written and referenced do not come to grips with the problems particular to infants and children and fail to discuss the commoner underlying conditions which predispose to Clostridial infection in infants.

The biggest drawback to this volume is undoubtedly its price. For his money the reader might expect considerably more than he gets, particularly in a text aimed at stimulating research, some of the referencing is sparse and controversial areas do not receive the discussion they deserve. The text, however, is clear, easy to read and well presented, but its present price is a major disadvantage which will limit its appeal and does not allow me to recommend it.

P J MILLA

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## Books

**Paediatric gastroenterology: aspects of immunology and infection** Edited by D Branski, G Dinari, P Rozen, and J A Walker-Smith. (Pp. 416; illustrated; £131.80.) Basel: Karger, 1986.

This volume gathers together contributions from an international group of investigators and describes recent developments in gastrointestinal immunology and infection which are particularly relevant to children. As much gastrointestinal disease in childhood results from immune disorder this book is potentially very valuable. The editors intend that the

**Biopsy pathology of the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum** By D W Day. (Pp. 293; illustrated; £30.) London: Chapman and Hall, 1986.

This book is another in the useful series of monographs, published by Chapman and Hall, presenting the biopsy pathology of various body organs, written by experts in the field. For gastroenterologists, this current work by David Day adds oesophagus, stomach and duodenum to the earlier volumes already available on liver and small intestine.

It is an excellent book for diagnostic pathologists and their clinical gastroenterological colleagues. It has a straightforward approach with a simple style and one is not overwhelmed by large amounts of contradictory data and figures, as occurs in many comprehensive works. For example, the variants of

gastric intestinal metaplasia present a complex problem if one reads the original literature, but Dr Day distills out the key observations required for a diagnostic approach. The same applies to the section on lymphomas, another complex area. As well as the five chapters on the stomach, there are three on the oesophagus and two on the duodenum. Those on the latter two sites fill a useful void in the literature for what are generally considered poor pathological sisters to the excitement of gastric pathology. The book finishes with a helpful section on upper gastrointestinal cytology contributed by Dr O Husain.

The illustrations are clear and well organised, being close to the relevant text. For clinicians who regularly sit in on biopsy sessions to review the weeks endoscopies, they form a valuable source of reference to check up on the pathologists diagnoses.

I strongly recommend this moderately priced book to pathology departments receiving any upper gastrointestinal material and to clinicians keen to understand the language of their pathology department.

There is one obvious omission, for *Campylobacter pylori* is not mentioned. I imagine however, this organism only reached the news stand as Dr Day with a huge sigh of relief posted off the final proofs. It will be an addition to look forward to in the second edition.

ASHLEY B PRICE

**Silvergirl's surgery biliary tract** Edited by James O Robinson. (Pp. 233; illustrated; £38.) London: Wolfe Medical Publications Ltd, 1987.

Many a young aspiring surgeon, physician, radiologist or pathologist may wish to write a paper or prepare a dissertation on diseases related to the biliary tract. What then could be more suitable than an erudite historical introduction? To them this brief annotated historical review and reprint of ancient and classical articles will prove a boon. Even if you are not writing an article or thesis you will enjoy delving into the history of biliary disease; to tiptoe across the stepping stones of medical history will prove both stimulating and humbling.

This work is a collection of classical papers that have illuminated the progress of the elucidation, investigation, and treatment of biliary disease. The first paper is a fascinating 'Digest of historical literature' written in 1863 by Jophann Thudichum. It is followed by Jean-Louis Petit's account of empyema of the gall bladder written in 1743 and Theodor Kocher's story of 'Head-sized empyema of the gall bladder treated by incision'.

The articles are well chosen, well translated, and

well edited. A few accompanying photographs of the authors and sometimes their patients add to the charm of the publication. I would have enjoyed even more biographical notes and even more photographs. It will be sad if the cost deters many from adding this slim volume to their personal library.

J ALEXANDER-WILLIAMS

**Clinical gastroenterology Vol 1, no 1. Liver tumours** Edited by R Williams, and P J Johnson. (Pp. 210; illustrated; £15.) London: Baillière Tindall, 1987.

After many years the well known format of *Clinics in gastroenterology* has changed, being replaced by an American series and a British version called *Clinical gastroenterology*. The first issue on liver tumours is thus of particular interest.

The format is identical to its predecessor with good line drawings and extensive up to date references. The subject is tackled extremely well by contributors who have particular experience in aspects of liver tumours ranging from aetiology to diagnosis and treatment. In particular, innovative techniques such as the diagnostic and therapeutic use of monoclonal antibodies and the use of implantable cytotoxic delivery systems are critically reviewed.

The overall impression given by this volume is that, despite the poor prognosis of liver tumours, research in molecular biology, biochemistry and oncology offers hope for the future. The editors of the first issue of *Clinical gastroenterology* have contributed well to the future success of the series.

M MYSZOR AND C O RECORD

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## News

### BSG Jubilee Meeting

The Jubilee Meeting of the British Society of Gastroenterology was held in the University of London Institute of Education and School of Oriental and African Studies from 15–18 September 1987 under the Presidency of Mr John Alexander-Williams. The programme was structured to provide parallel continuous sequences of scientific presentations and BSG/Glaxo International Teaching Sessions; interspersed in these events, there were various symposia and lectures. The very large number of communications that were selected – 365 oral and poster communications – reflected not only the pent up