

time. The more basic chapters are in general of a high standard, but one wonders how such disparate topics will be of interest to the practising doctor in the fields of gastroenterology/hepatology. The editing in parts is poor with spelling mistakes and misreferences; and there are many other reviews of some of these topics, for instance delta hepatitis. One can only confess to a slight disappointment with the volume.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Reoperative surgery of the abdomen Edited by Donald E Fry. (Pp. 431; illustrated; \$83.50.) New York: Marcel Dekker, 1986.

There are many books dealing with first operations, but very few that concentrate on reoperation. This omission is becoming increasingly important as more patients do well after operation, live for many years and present again with further problems which may or may not be related to the first. For example, intraperitoneal adhesions, rather than strangulated herniae, are now the commonest cause of intestinal obstruction in the USA.

This book is, therefore, both timely and informative. It is very compact and runs to over 400 pages. Each chapter is followed by key references and the discussion is illustrated by graphs and conventional radiographs, as well as CAT scans. The drawings of operations are clear but some are rather 'heavy' and unrefined. Chapters on second look operation for cancer and reoperation for portal hypertension are particularly helpful and are written from experience rather than theory. There is a welcome constructive criticism of established practices: for example, the evidence for the time honoured policy of interval appendicectomy, several weeks after an appendix mass has resolved, is found to be quite thin.

Unfortunately, the first three chapters in particular, are spoiled by poor English and include some bad examples of 'medspeak'.

In summary, this is a book full of valuable advice for the more experienced surgeon who will be faced with these problems of reoperation increasingly as the years go by.

A G JOHNSON

Nuclear gastroenterology Edited by P J A Robinson. (Pp. 180; illustrated; £35.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

This book aims to review the principles, technical details, and application of newer radionuclide procedures for alimentary tract and hepatobiliary investigation in a manner suitable for first line reference by physicians, surgeons, and radiologists with an interest in gastroenterology. A tall order, perhaps, but it is remarkably successful in meeting these objectives. How many gastroenterologists are uneasy about their use (or non-use) of radionuclide

tests for measurement of oesophageal transit, gastric emptying or duodenogastric reflux, the assessment of inflammatory disease within the abdomen, gastro-intestinal bleeding or liver/gall bladder imaging? Most, I imagine, would welcome up to date information about the performance and value of such investigations and would wish to relate such information to their own clinical practice.

Ten British authors have contributed to the book under Dr Robinson's editorial guidance and, in 11 chapters, cover the topics indicated above and a few more besides. Some are outstandingly informative, well balanced and fully referenced reviews, and these seem to me to be the most valuable. Chapters on the assessment of the small intestine and on scintigraphy in paediatrics have been written in a slightly different style without detailed referencing and are less useful in consequence. The book is liberally illustrated and Churchill Livingstone's usual high standards of production are maintained. In the context of current book prices, £35 for this one seems very fair.

Should it be recommended in the familiar cliche terms for every postgraduate library or for every gastroenterologist's bookshelf? Such advice from reviewers seldom makes me rush out to the bookshop and I believe my lack of response is often shared by others. *Nuclear gastroenterology*, however, may be commended to any gastroenterologist who is reappraising the nuclear medicine tests undertaken on his own patients, or who is considering the introduction of new procedures to his own institution. This book will give him most of the information and expert opinion he needs and I know of no other single source from which it can be obtained.

R C HEADING

Bile pigments and jaundice. Molecular, metabolic, and medical aspects Edited by J D Ostrow. (Pp. 724; illustrated; \$119.50.) New York and Basel: Marcel Dekker, 1986.

This is an authoritative comprehensive manuscript: a worthy successor to Dr With's classics on the same topics in 1954 and 1968. Thirty five authors of international repute cover topics ranging from molecular and physical chemistry of bile pigments through their normal synthesis, transport and metabolism in man and other vertebrates and concluding with the consideration of the light-harvesting, phycobiliproteins of algae and the photomorphogenic phytochromes which regulate seed germination and flowering in higher plants. In between, all aspects of the measurement of bilirubin, its intestinal and renal transport and specific metabolic abnormalities of bile metabolism are considered in depth, together with fetal and neonatal handicaps in bilirubin metabolism and the production of bile pigment stones. It is disappointing