of reduced gall bladder function and/or development of liver disease.

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Books

Clinics in gastroenterology: symptoms in gastroenterology. Edited by B Gazzard, and A Theodossi. (Pp. 142; illustrated; £13.50.) London: WB Saunders, 1985.

This is a curious volume, which starts off as one thing and ends up as another. It opens, predictably and properly, with the clinical gospel according to Spiegelhalter, Knill-Jones, and de Dombal, which may be summarised by saying that if only doctors were more consistent, the outcome of their deliberations would be more predictable, and *vice versa*. Thereafter, the editors seem to have lost confidence or even interest in their chosen subject. Bennett does address the topic of oesophageal symptoms, but other contributors seem less interested in symptomatology. Drossman and Lowman, for example, write on 'Epidemiology, diagnosis, and treatment' of irritable bowel syndrome, and 'Diarrhoea as a symptom' has a similar orientation. 'Alcohol-related symptoms' appears to consider that haematological and biochemical changes are 'symptoms'. There isn't anything wrong with the chapters; it's just that you wouldn't expect to find them sold under this general title, and this materially reduces the value of this book. Editorial inconsistency seems to be a recurring problem with this series.

DAVID WINGATE

Clinics in gastroenterology 15 Edited by J A Walker-Smith. (Pp. 203; illustrated; £13.50.) London: WB Saunders, 1986.

The editor, Professor John Walker-Smith, is an Australian exiled in London. It is therefore appro-

priate that he has chosen a group of collaborators almost exclusively from Australia or London to review growing points in a now thriving specialty of paediatric gastroenterology. The selection of subjects is personal, but timely – antigen handling, infectious diarrhoea, food sensitive enteropathies, inflammatory bowel disease, intestinal motility, nutrition in cystic fibrosis, abnormalities of the biliary tree, chronic active hepatitis, congenital microvillous atrophy.

The individual chapters are of good quality, with up to date references (to early 1985). The volume can be highly recommended both to adult gastroenterologists (for interest) and to paediatric gastroenterologists (for essential information.)

ALEXANDER S MCNEISH

Clinics in gastroenterology – Portal hypertension

Edited by J P Benhamou and D Lebec. (Pp. 292; illustrated; £13.50.) London: WB Saunders, 1986.

Topics were selected for this issue because of recent advances in that area, because of clinical importance or because they are not well known to the liver specialist or internist. Despite such disparate reasons a wonderful choice has been made by these two French experts, – Professor Jean-Pierre Benhamou with his critical appraisal of the clinical data, and Professor Didier Lebec with his enthusiasm particularly in the pharmacological area.

Although many of the contributors have been drawn from Europe, there are also authors from America, Canada, South America, and England. As a person long interested in portal hypertension, I have to read the whole volume and I was rarely disappointed. The editors themselves contribute a superb chapter on non-cirrhotic portal hypertension; there is also new information on varices in unusual sites, and the occurrence of pulmonary arterial hypertension has never been so extensively reviewed previously. For the practising doctor there are excellent accounts on the management of acute variceal haemorrhage and present position of pharmacological therapy. There are also specific and excellent accounts of portal hypertension in childhood, and in areas of the world where schistosomiasis is rife.

The reviewer was asked to assess the volume as to whether it was up to date, comprehensive and useful. It is all three, and I do not know of a better volume around.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Secondary prevention of colorectal cancer Edited by P Rozen and S J Winawer. (Pp. 274; illustrated; £77.70.) Basel: Karger, 1986.

Anyone involved in clinical medical research is encouraged to persist by the prospect, all too often a