

medical profession's ability to communicate was better.

I cannot see a great market for this small book, but one must congratulate the authors on achieving what they have. I note there is as yet no volume in the series on 'Stomach and intestines: the facts', but I cannot imagine this deficiency (if it is one) will persist for long.

ALAN READ

**A colour atlas of trans-thoracic repair of hiatus hernia.**

By R Pringle (Pp. 62; illustrated; £17.) London: Wolfe Medical Publications, 1987.

This is the 43rd in a projected series of 200 colour atlases, each devoted to a single surgical procedure. The common theme of the volumes published to date is the combination of an author of established repute with lavish colour illustrations of high quality. The current volume maintains the tradition, although its appeal will be to surgeons who, for the most part conduct their antireflux surgery transabdominally.

The principal purpose of the volume is to provide a stepwise guide to the conduct of the Belsey Mark IV operation, and the colour illustrations are supplemented by line drawings, where appropriate, and interspersed with brief discussions of diagnosis, indications for surgery, preoperative preparation and post-operative management. Those surgeons with a strict gastroenterological upbringing will observe the emphasis on anatomical factors, with little reference to the concept of antireflux surgery in the absence of a hiatus hernia. They would doubtless prefer more reference to the role of manometry and pH monitoring in the diagnosis and categorisation of patients before surgery and may not wholly espouse the view that more extensive surgical procedures involving resection and oesophageal replacement are usually indicated when reflux is complicated by stricture. A surprising omission in postoperative management, particularly when post-thoracotomy pain is acknowledged as one of the commonest complications, is reference to the value of thoracic epidural analgesia.

The book is well produced and is reasonably priced considering the quality of the illustrations. It succeeds in its objective of producing a clear, concise guide to the conduct of the Belsey Mark IV repair. Its appeal, however, will be predominantly to thoracic rather than gastroenterological surgeons.

A WATSON

**Your gut feelings. A complete guide to living better with intestinal problems.** By Henry D Janowitz. (Pp. 203; illustrated; \$15.95.) New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

The radio programme 'Brain of Britain' highlights the extraordinary range of knowledge that the human

mind can encompass. The Achilles heel of contestants is usually science and medicine. In a recent programme the correct response to the question 'Is the arm attached to the shoulder or the pelvis?' was greeted with loud applause!

Much excellent literature is now available to educate the general public in medical matters. This volume focuses on gastroenterology. That part of our anatomy to which we gastroenterologists are devoted still seems best described by the title of this Journal, conceived by Hugh Clegg nearly 30 years ago.

This volume 'Your gut feelings' written by Dr Henry Janowitz, a doyen of gastroenterology practice in New York is a masterpiece of clarity and balanced common sense. It has international appeal with only the American spelling, enthusiasm for annual health checks and the price quoted in dollars to identify its origin.

A short clear description of the anatomy of the gut is followed by a chapter on the irritable bowel syndrome which opens with a succinct description of the typical sufferer. The author addresses questions that patients must hesitate to ask 'If the diagnosis is so simple why does the doctor order so many tests?' and 'Why does the doctor seem more concerned with the conditions that I do not have than the ones that bother me?' Colonic spasm is usefully described as how the hand feels after being squeezed for five minutes (. . . and think what it must be like after 30 minutes).

The chapter on Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis is clear particularly in the way management is related to the site and extent of disease. There is a nice sense of balance in the discussion of the benefits and hazards of investigation including colonoscopy. This section closes with sensible informed advice concerning the cancer risk, pregnancy, and fertility.

The chapter on diarrhoea includes a useful holiday planner for having that idyllic holiday without travellers diarrhoea. The chapter on polyps and cancer which highlights the 60 000 deaths a year from colorectal cancer in the USA may alarm some patients! The balance could be restored by emphasising that the majority are elderly.

There are useful chapters concerned with diverticular disease and of food allergy. The ageing gut includes an excellent description in lay terms of angiodysplasia. The chapter on medicine and the gut even includes acute intermittent porphyria.

The index would do credit to a medical textbook and includes biofeedback, campylobacter, oncogenes, STBD (*not* stoppers for the bloody diarrhoea) but sexually transmitted bowel disease, and vibrio cholerae.

This is an excellent book and should be recommended to patients who need more information