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- 3 Mizon C, Becuwe C, Balduyck M, *et al.* Qualitative study of fecal alpha-1-proteinase inhibitor in normal subjects and patients with Crohn's disease. *Clin Chem* 1988; **34**: 2268–70.
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Books

Epithelia. Vol 1, no 1. Edited by CS Potten. (Pp. 105; illustrated; £50.00 per annum.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

For one scientific journal to review another may seem if not incestuous, then at least a trifle patronising. Moreover, welcoming the birth of a journal possibly competing for some of the same material might be regarded as foolhardy. While there is no doubt that the explosion of scientific journals has much to do with the profits of publishing, one side effect that is beneficial is the creation of journals to meet interdisciplinary needs. That epithelial tissues have common structural and functional properties and are afflicted by similar ills is not a new perception, but the creation of a journal that will allow the exchange of information on this topic is an innovation that should be welcomed by gastroenterologists. It has been calculated that provided you count the microvillus surface area, the surface area of the human intestine is larger than a tennis court. Given a territory of this size to administer, gastroenterologists should welcome all the help they can get from others, and this new journal should provide a valuable channel for this. Librarians, please note.

DAVID WINGATE

1987 Year book of digestive diseases. Edited by N J Greenberger and F G Moody. (Pp. 487; illustrated; price not stated.) Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers, 1987.

It is a pleasure to welcome an old friend again – or, rather, two old friends. Once more, Greenberger and Moody have completed their trawl through an annual harvest of 20 000 papers in gastroenterology and have presented a selection of 250 for our consideration. As always, the abstracts are comprehensive, and often supplemented by key figures or radiographs; above all, each one carries an editorial postscript by one or other of the dynamic duo that emphasises the 'take

home' message. This is an easy and pleasant way to keep up with recent developments and continuing controversies. The publishers are to be commended for maintaining a high standard of layout and illustration.

DAVID WINGATE

New pharmacology of ulcer disease. Edited by S Szabo and Gy Mozsik. (Pp. 579; illustrated; \$75.00.) New York: Elsevier Science Publishers, 1987.

This book is based on an International Symposium in Pecs, Hungary, in August 1984. It begins and ends well with Wormsley in Part I reminding us of our ignorance on the causes of ulcers and Goldenberg in the final chapter emphasising that the pathogenesis of peptic ulcer pain is unknown and that there is a poor correlation of ulcer healing and symptomatic remission.

Part II (comparative) covers mucosal protection. Part III (special) covers in 44 chapters the 14 different groups of anti-ulcer drugs. Acetazolamide is the drug claimed to have the highest four week healing rates, 95–98% for gastric ulcer, and 97–98% for duodenal ulcer.

The editors have selected experts in their fields, and they have carefully presented experimental data and reviewed literature on their topics. Gastroenterology like most biomedical sciences, however, is caught up in a flood of multi-author, multi-editor texts often originating from conferences. However happy I, as an ulcerologist, am to add this to other similar books on my shelf, I still sometimes wonder whether this massive investment of time and hard work by so many scientists should be spent in such compilations, rather than on their research, their teaching, their patients and even their families.

J H BARON

Diseases of the small intestine in childhood. By J A Walker-Smith. (Pp. 464; illustrated; £45.00.) London: Butterworths, 1988.

John Walker-Smith writes very well indeed. Two previous editions of this book were both highly successful; the third is even better. In an expanded text he provides a highly readable, enthusiastic and up-to-date account of small intestinal disease in childhood. Although paediatric gastroenterology is now a well established speciality, it is one in which new diseases are still being recognised, and this book accurately reflects this steadily increasing body of knowledge.

The coverage is comprehensive, and, as one would expect, coeliac disease and gastroenteritis are dealt with particularly well. Not all would share the author's enthusiasm for routine jejunal biopsy in