
This is a delightful, easy to read, little mono-
graph from the Lahey Clinic in Massachusetts.
The Clinic has a long tradition of interest and
experience in the management of diverticular
disease. Twenty years ago in 1971 Dr Bentley
Colcock, towards the end of his distinguished
career, published a monograph also entitled
"Diverticular disease of the colon. As the natural
successor to Bentley Colcock the senior author,
Dr Veidenheimer, has continued an interest
in diverticular disease with the combined
attributes of a wise physician and a thoughtful
and skilful surgeon. One hopes that the junior
author is already planning another book of
the same name to be published in 2011.

Even by then it is unlikely that we will know
all the answers about the management of
complicated diverticular disease, nor are
we likely to have achieved the eradication of
the underlying tendency to form diverticula
in the colon. The authors state 'with advances
in medical treatment and technology, including
broad spectrum antibiotics, new imaging tech-
niques, and better pre-operation and post
operative care, the treatment of patients with
diverticulitis has improved over the years.'
This may be true at the Lahey Clinic but for
many surgeons this is still a difficult to manage,
dangerous malady. It is a quaintly old fashioned
book; it looks as if it was lovingly created, typeset,
and published in either Cambridge in New England or
Oxford in Old England. The quality of the illustrations
throughout the book is good but even the admirable
line drawings, mostly by Francis E Stockel, are more in the style of the 1970s than of today. Illustrations are mostly ancillary and
more seem to be from before the late 1970s than
since. Their advice is conservative and reitera-
tion of their views on investigation and manage-
ment would guarantee success in higher
examinations in surgery. The logical arguments
of the presentation of results is clear and easy
to read. The reader does not have to struggle
to follow the arguments. It is a book that the
enthusiast can pick up and read from end to
end with hardly a stop which is more than can
be said for most monographs these days.

J ALEXANDER-WILLIAMS


The oesophagus has done well for books in recent
years and one might question the need for
another. Dr Castell has, however, produced an
excellent and useful tome that fills a gap in
the market. It is also reasonably priced by
today's standards.

There are 40 chapters by acknowledged
experts who provide comprehensive coverage
of pathophysiology, diagnosis, and treatment
of oesophageal disease. Most of the chapters
are excellent and several are outstanding. An
element of the latter is the chapter on anatomy
and physiology. This is usually put in to make a
book look complete, but in this case it is well
worth a read. Also worthy a read are the chapters
on oesophagitis in the immunocompromised,
patient and on cutaneous diseases and the
oesophagus. It is rather unfair to individual
contributors to pick favourites in this way, but
this is a book with wide appeal and I am sure
that most who open it will find something of
interest.

Inevitably, not all is perfect. Some of the contribu-
tors seem reluctant to express their
own opinions on controversial matters and
some sections are short on detail. These are
minor criticisms, however, of a book that
should stand the test of time. This book should
be on the shelves of all clinicians with a serious
interest in the oesophagus. It should also be
available for reference in every oesophageal
laboratory. I have just placed my order for
a second copy.

J BANCEWICZ


Alimentary pharmacology used to be simple.
Until 15 years ago there were fewer treatments
available, their mode of action was straight
forward, and gastroenterology was not over-
whelmed by papers on the pharmacology of
new drugs and their clinical comparisons.
Since then there has been a therapeutic revolu-
tion. New drugs are more specific, more fully
tested and evaluated in more detail, and ulti-
mately more competitive. Consequently,
research in gastroenterology has been increas-
ingly taken up in pharmacological studies and
there has been an explosion in published works
on gastrointestinal pharmacology. Compre-
hensive reviews are few and scattered.

This book attempts to draw the facts together
into a pharmacopoeia of gastroenterology and it
seems to exceed it an extent. An introductory
chapter on basic pathophysiology in each therapeutic
area is followed by chapters on the individual
compounds. These have the standard format
covering chemistry, pharmacodynamics, phar-
macokinetics, and clinical pharmacology,
with generous detail and comprehensive references
which just reach into 1990. It has multiple authors but most are from Milan, the pharmacological
capital of Italy.

The coverage of specifically gastrointestinal
drugs is extensive but corticosteroids, immuno-
suppressants, interferon, and similar agents are
not included. Ulcer healing, market dominating
drugs take up half the book whereas inflam-
matory bowel disease has one chapter on
5-Aminosalicylic acid, perhaps reflecting the
priorities of the pharmacologist rather than
the gastroenterologist. Antidiarrhoeals and
laxatives are barely mentioned.

The topics covered are done well and provide
good summaries of information available in
1990. There are gaps and there may be too
much basic pharmacology for the clinical
gastroenterologist. This is a useful reference
book, however, that should have a place in any
departmental library.

J H TAYLOR


The declared aim in the preface of this book is
to provide the reader with an analysis of the
many gastrointestinal emergencies which may
confront gastroenterologists or surgeons. The
book is divided into chapters and a number of
subjects are out of date by the time of printing.
Although this is to some extent true in this
book, it is a good and comprehensive baseline
of the pathophysiology and acute management
of gastrointestinal emergencies. Nevertheless,
all the technical topics are recent and are of
interest to the gastroenterologist. An example of this is the chapter on therapeutic biliary endoscopy, which is certainly of interest, but does not fall into the
strict definition of a gastrointestinal emergency.
Along the same lines, it would have been of
value to have a chapter on laparoscopic chole-
cystectomy and its problems.

Of particular interest is the section on comp-
lications of procedures such as upper gastro-
intestinal endoscopy and diagnostic ECP and its
therapeutic applications, sclerotherapy, liver
biopsy, and percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy. These are of value and are well
written but if percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy is true at all as a chapter with
significant complications, so must intravenous
nutrition and enteral nutrition, which are
nowadays essential facets of gastrointestinal
practice. The complications of these other
forms of nutritional support are not dealt with
in the book. The section on pregnancy - acute
abdomen, liver disease, and radiation problems
is unusual and of interest, as is also the chapter on small and large bowel complications of
bone marrow transplantation.

It is somewhat curious to have all the colour
plates near the start of the book and identical
to those in black and white within the text; cross
referencing, however, is adequate. Overall,
although slightly uneven in its subject matter,
chapters are generally well written, well
referenced, and provide good pathogenetic
and therapeutic information for those working at
the sharp end of gastroenterology. It is a
daunting task to have brought together authors
writing on such a wide range of clinical
problems within this difficult area and Mark
Taylor is to be congratulated on managing to
compel and complex and difficult problems. Departments of Gastroenterology and Surgery will surely
benefit by having this volume.

R J RUSSELL

Oxford textbook of clinical hepatology. Edited by Neil McIntyre, Jean-Pierre Ben-
hamou, Johannes Bircher, Mario Rizzetto, and Juan Rodes. (Pp 1550; illustrated; £195.)

This is a large, new two volume work covering
1460 pages of text, exclusive of appendices and a
comprehensive index, edited by five distin-
guished hepatologists supported by 187 con-
tributors. Three quarters of the authors come
from European countries, a substantial minority from the USA, and others from Canada, Australia, and Brazil. The second volume, The
gastrointestinal tract and liver transplantation,
is the chapter on therapeutic biliary endoscopy, which is certainly of interest, but does not fall into the
strict definition of a gastrointestinal emergency.
Along the same lines, it would have been of
value to have a chapter on laparoscopic chole-
cystectomy and its problems.

Of particular interest is the section on comp-
lications of procedures such as upper gastro-
intestinal endoscopy and diagnostic ECP and its
therapeutic applications, sclerotherapy, liver
biopsy, and percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy. These are of value and are well
written but if percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy is true at all as a chapter with
significant complications, so must intravenous
nutrition and enteral nutrition, which are
nowadays essential facets of gastrointestinal
practice. The complications of these other
forms of nutritional support are not dealt with
in the book. The section on pregnancy - acute
abdomen, liver disease, and radiation problems
is unusual and of interest, as is also the chapter on small and large bowel complications of
bone marrow transplantation.

It is somewhat curious to have all the colour
plates near the start of the book and identical
to those in black and white within the text; cross
referencing, however, is adequate. Overall,
although slightly uneven in its subject matter,
chapters are generally well written, well
referenced, and provide good pathogenetic
and therapeutic information for those working at
the sharp end of gastroenterology. It is a
daunting task to have brought together authors
writing on such a wide range of clinical
problems within this difficult area and Mark
Taylor is to be congratulated on managing to
compel and complex and difficult problems. Departments of Gastroenterology and Surgery will surely
benefit by having this volume.

R J RUSSELL