Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug-induced jejunal and colonic disease

EDITOR.—Fellows and his colleagues (Gut 1992; 33: 1424–6) claim that ‘most previously reported cases have shown ileal disease and no case to date has shown involvement of the colon.’

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that we published a case of diarrhoeal disease of the colon in the April issue of Gastroenterology in 1991 several months before the report of Fellows et al was published in Gut. We were more cautious in asking for priority and we stated ‘that to our knowledge such a case had not been observed before.’ The caution was indeed justified as we then saw several additional cases in a short time.

We submitted this extended case report for publication to a well honed British journal and we were informed that our cases did not contribute to the better understanding of this condition. Moreover, Dr H Sprow, the editor of Clinical Gastroenterology, where the paper was subsequently accepted for publication, was kind enough to draw our attention to an earlier publication of two such cases in the Lancet, in 1989. Additionally we found a recent report in endoscopic studies.

We thus agree with a Lancet editorial in 1989 that colonic damage by non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs is probably very common. It is of interest that all the seven cases we have seen to now were treated with diclofenac, applied in slow release form, and it is possible that we have seen a whole series of such cases in less than two years as this drug is manufactured in Switzerland and is the most common non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug in use in our country. It is nevertheless appreciated that this case report was published in Gut as we are sure that this condition is still not generally recognised.

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BOOK REVIEWS


Accounts of the steady progress of research in coeliac disease in the last quarter of a century are provided by the published proceedings of half a dozen international conferences; there have also been a number of single or multi-author books, in several languages, which provide personal perspectives or attempt to give accounts of one or more facets of this fascinating disease. This invaluable contribution on coeliac disease falls in the latter category. There is up to date, authoritative, and extremely well edited contributions produced predominantly but not exclusively by British authors. These are preceded by a fascinating personal account of the early work carried out by Charles Anderson, who explains in detail the separate and collaborative contributions by the Dutch and British teams in the early 1950s. Those of us who have felt unappreciated by US referees and editors will note wryly the four papers which described the deleterious role of gluten in coeliac disease that were submitted by Weigers, van de Kamer, and Dicke to ‘a well known American paediatric journal’ and returned without even being accepted! At the end of the book there is a personal chapter by the editor which highlights important clinical and pathogenetic issues and in which he clearly illustrates the interpretation of the current state of knowledge, and his views as to potential directions for the future.

The two clinical accounts of childhood and adult coeliac disease fully reinforce Dr Marsh’s comment that clinicians of all specialties need to develop a high degree of awareness of the existence of coeliac disease; regrettably it seems unlikely that clinicians, other than gastroenterologists, will buy and read this book. There are useful chapters on dermatitis herpetiformis and malignancy, comprehensive apart from a notable absence of recommendations as to the treatment of the lymphoma associated with coeliac disease. Dr Marsh has brought together the contents of a dozen of his publications, and work still unpublished, in his description of mucosal pathology. Once again, new issues which require investigation are raised, for example the relatively unstudied effect of gluten sensitivity on the stomach; the suggestion that effects on the microvasculature of the gut may be very important in producing villus damage and epithelial cell dysfunction in this disease. It would have been useful to have had a conventional pathologist produce a section on the differential diagnosis of enteropathies in clinical practice, to complement a clinical scientist’s analysis of the many subtle changes which require computerised image analysis to assess properly.

The remaining chapters cover epidemiology, genetics, antibodies, T cell mediated injury, and the use of these techniques with research questions. Two chapters should be read by all those involved in this disease: one on coeliac disease as a model for research on the genetic background to disease and a final chapter on the psychological mechanisms of coping by using a behavioural model operating at four levels (intrasubjective, interpersonal, and intervention). These chapters are very comprehensive, using terminology sometimes difficult for readers untrained in social sciences or psychology. More important, I was left unclear how the chapters would be useful to patients living with coeliac disease and to the clinical practice and research questions. Two chapters should be read by all those involved in this disease: one on coeliac disease as a model for research on the genetic background to disease and a final chapter on the psychological mechanisms of coping by using a behavioural model operating at four levels (intrasubjective, interpersonal, and intervention). These chapters are very comprehensive, using terminology sometimes difficult for readers untrained in social sciences or psychology. More important, I was left unclear how the chapters would be useful to patients living with coeliac disease and to the clinical practice and research questions.

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The purpose of this book, according to Neil Kaplanow who has edited the volume, is to provide a reaction to the recent review of hepatobiliary disorders for a general readership, including students, house staff, family physicians, and gastroenterologists. It is not primarily directed towards the practising, already expert, hepatologist for whom a number of excellent textbooks on hepatobiliary diseases have appeared in the USA and in Europe during the past 10 years. Many of those are based on extremely useful clinical account of coeliac disease, and for that reason alone it deserves a place not only in gastrointestinal units but in general medical libraries. It might be useful to residents in research or orientated chapters in the latter half of the book are of an equally high standard and will mean that this book reaches an even wider audience and will be found on the personal book shelves of many clinicians, pathologists, and investigators.