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detailed references to the numerous citations in the text. It would be invidious to single out individual contributions because inevitably this would reflect personal interest and unusual cases one has recently seen. I have read comparatively few sections in any detail, but have dipped into many others. I picked out sections on peptic ulcer, intestinal malabsorption, inflammatory bowel disease, and the irritable bowel syndrome because I see patients with these problems all the time and feel fairly confident when I deal with them. The sections were all well written and informative and the relevant science was well presented. It was reassuring for a busy clinician, with too little time for detailed reading, to learn that he has kept reasonably up to date; but also stimulating to find some new ideas or provoking thoughts.

There are separate sections on the interpretation of gastrointestinal symptoms or on the numerous methods of investigation available, but the specialist has access to the many texts on gastrointestinal endoscopy and radiology for example. There are no colour prints, so that histology, endoscopic appearances, and the skin cannot be illustrated adequately. Some of the line drawings of surgical interest (but by no means all) are rather unclear and few of the x rays have accompanying explanatory drawings. These are minor criticisms, however, and so do not detract from the overall value of the book.

I can recommend the book unreservedly to all trainees in gastroenterology, who must have access to it, and I do think that most gastrointestinal physicians would want their own personal copies of an outstanding contribution to the practice of their speciality. They may have to reinforce their shelves – the two volumes weigh five kilos – and earn a little bit extra as the cost is £175!

G E SLADEN

Viral Hepatitis, Scientific Basis and Clinical Management. By A J Zuckerman and H C Thomas. (Pp 600; illustrated; £95.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1993.

The editors of this book have set themselves the task of designing a volume to deal with the virology, epidemiology, diagnosis, pathobiology, treatment, and prevention of disease associated with viral hepatitis. This is a rapidly developing area particularly in respect of hepatitis C. There were, for example, more than 1000 publications on hepatitis C in 1993, and there have been 300 new citations since the publication of this book. Although the bibliographies are comprehensive, there are few citations from 1993 and thus a large proportion of the recent publications on this subject are not reviewed. In an attempt to overcome this, each chapter is provided with an update section to permit addition of the most recent publications in the field. These are of essence, however, patchy.

Two specific additions that could be made come to mind, namely, a chapter dealing with other viruses that can be of clinical significance in liver disease such as

cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr virus, herpes simplex, etc, and secondly, a chapter devoted to interactions between the different hepatitis viruses. This is very much an overlooked area, which is particularly important in the clinical treatment of patients. Having made these obvious criticisms, however, it is also true to say that the book provides a good overview of the subject and will be in demand as a reference work in most well stocked libraries.

A L W F EDDLESTON

Minimally Invasive Surgery in Gastrointestinal Cancer. Edited by M A Cuesta and A Nagy. (Pp 186; illustrated; £59.95.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1993.

This is a book that will sit well on the coffee table especially in spring as the cover is colourful and eye catching. Unfortunately, the contents are not quite so interesting. It sets out to cover what is now normally called 'minimal access surgery' in gastrointestinal cancer. It does not keep entirely to its brief, however, as there is a chapter on 'Physiological Responses and Advantages of Minimally Invasive Surgery', which could be found in any minimal access surgical textbook and has nothing really to do with gastrointestinal cancer. Likewise, the following chapter on 'Instruments', is probably unnecessary in such a specialised textbook. Everyone should know what instruments to use if they are going to embark upon what is really a super specialised part of minimal access surgery.

The layout in double columns at first looks quite pleasing but is actually difficult to digest and I am sure will make readers cross eyed should they wish to read this book for long periods. The illustrations in the main, however, are excellent and in those chapters that have colour photographs, these are good apart from the rather blue ones on the chapter on liver surgery.

I enjoyed immensely the opening chapter, which sets the scene for this textbook. Unfortunately, the textbook then strays somewhat until the sensible chapter by Philippe Mouret on 'General Diagnostic Aspects'.

There are one or two excellent chapters, especially part one on liver cancers 'Assessment of Liver Tumours' by Frederick Greene and the very clear part one of the chapter on pancreatic cancer 'Assessment of Pancreatic Cancer' by John and Garden.

As with all multiple author books, there is obviously some repetition though the editors have done well to keep this to a minimum. The best chapter in the book for its clarity, excellent illustrations, and the fact that they have actually put in full results is the chapter on 'Endo-Rectal Surgery for Early Rectal Cancer' by Said and Buess.

I wondered why there were comments about instruments for hernia repair and discussion about using the CUSA for dissecting the gall bladder. I have never seen a malignant hernia and gall bladder cancer is rare. Usually

this is unrecognised until the gall bladder has been removed. While discussing this, it is interesting that there is little made about extraction devices and the use of bags. I would have thought that this deserved a full chapter. The other glaring omission is that there is no chapter on port site recurrences or indeed local recurrences. The effect of carbon dioxide, the laser plume, and diathermy for the spread of malignant cells should have been considered in such a specialised textbook. It would also have been interesting to have read about the increasing incidence of port site and local recurrences.

There are some smaller omissions in each of the chapters; there is no mention of colour flow ultrasonography in the chapter on the liver. In the pancreatic chapter, laparoscopic Whipple's procedure is not mentioned although this has been performed and yet laparoscopic hemi-hepatectomy was mentioned although no figures or results are given for this procedure. In the chapter on splenectomy, there is no mention as to whether embolisation is ever used.

Finally, there is a chapter on training and once again, I think this chapter is misplaced as by the time this specialised book is read, surgeons should be fully trained and if they are not, this could be extremely dangerous. The chapter on the future is interesting but probably more should be made of the role of minimally invasive surgery for targeted chemotherapy and other forms of cancer treatment.

The book ought to be in surgical libraries for reference but I am unsure as to its real place. It is neither an operative manual nor a reference manual with little in the way of results. The potential is certainly there and I think the second edition may be greatly improved in this new developing type of surgery within the surgical oncological scene.

R D ROSIN

NOTES

Perspectives in Clinical Trials

The Second European Conference on Medicines Research will be held in Brussels on 5–6 December 1994. Further information from Janie Wardle, PO Box 806, Cambridge CB4 4RT. Tel: +44 (0) 954 252516; fax: +44 (0) 954 252517.

Directory of Training Posts

A Directory of Training Posts in Gastroenterology has been published by Hawker Publications for the British Society of Gastroenterology. Copies of the Directory are available from Hawker Publications Ltd, 13 Park House, 140 Battersea Park Road, London SW11 4NB at the price of £8.50.

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Gut publishes original papers, short rapid communications, leading articles, and reviews concerned with all aspects of the scientific basis of diseases of the alimentary tract, liver, and pancreas. Case reports will only be accepted if of exceptional merit. Letters related to articles published in *Gut* or with topics of general professional interest are welcomed. Authors should include the names and addresses of four experts whom the authors consider suitable to peer review their work.

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ETHICS Ethical aspects will be considered in the assessment of papers (see the Medical Research Council's publications on the ethics of human experimentation, and the World Medical Association's code of ethics, known as the Declaration of Helsinki (see *BMJ* 1964; ii: 177)).

SI UNITS All measurements except blood pressure are expressed in SI units. In tables and illustrations values are given in SI units. For general guidance on the International System of Units and some useful conversion

factors, see *The SI for Health Professions* (WHO, 1977). **NB: Such conversion is the responsibility of the author.**

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