
There are a number of questions that a book reviewer has to address before getting very far into a book. Sometimes, the obviously the most obvious will be to determine to what extent the author – but far more probably these days, the authors – succeed in attracting their (usually declared) intended readership. Life becomes more tricky when the preface manages to escape without explaining at whom the book is directed.

Rhodes and Tsai have tried 'to structure this book according to clinical problems as they are likely to present with 'clinical history'. They are likely to confront the clinician'.

Although the demarcation between physician and trainee is becoming very well defined in this country, I feel sure the authors cannot hope to attract consultant readers as they have perhaps intended. The book, however, as written, I think Rhodes and Tsai write well. It seems to me a sign of growing up that one can manage to learn something from a book without too many pictures. Nowadays, from the reviewer's perspective, too many authors are interested in many workers in the 'gut. I commend a sentence from the great gastroenterologist (and occasional playwright) who, in between clinic consultations, managed to write Hamlet (Act 2, scene 2) 'More matter with less art'.

IAN FORGACS


The intestine is one of the most rapidly renewing tissues in the body and therefore gut radiosensitivity is of increasing concern, particularly since the Chernobyl disaster. Thus, the interrelation of radiation and gut should be a subject of increasing interest to the discipline of gastroenterology using that term in its widest sense; clinicians certainly, whether they be physicians, surgeons, oncologists or workers in the field of industrial health. But also pathologists, physicists, experimental biologists, cancer research workers, physiologists, and anatomists who all, to a varying degree, have an interest in the subject. The title of this book will therefore catch the eye of regular readers of Gut as well as those who may occasionally turn its pages. Will the content be of interest to them?

The early chapters cover the structure and function of mammalian gut with special reference to techniques used to study radiation effects, in particular the clonal regeneration assay that assesses stem cell functional capacity. These chapters relate to experimental studies in rodents and are written by the two editors both of who work in the Patterson Institute of Cancer Research at the Christie Hospital, Manchester. Both have contributed signal advances to the understanding of radiation effects on gut.

The 6th United European Gastroenterology Week will be held on 18-23 October 1997 in Birmingham, United Kingdom. Further information from: Professor Neil McIntyre, University Department of Medicine, Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG. Tel: 0171 794 0500 ext: 3969; Fax: 0171 830 2321.

BARRY JACKSON

NOTES

Liver disease

The XXII International Update on Liver Disease will be held at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, London on 10-12 July 1997. Further details from: Professor Neil McIntyre, University Department of Medicine, Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG. Tel: 0171 794 0500 ext: 3969; Fax: 0171 830 2321.

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