



Cover: Oesophagus epithelium. Coloured scanning electron micrograph (SEM) of the epithelium (lining) of the oesophagus. The irregularly-shaped epithelial cells (blue & yellow) have a highly folded surface. These tiny folds are called microvillae. The flattened cells form a stratified squamous epithelium many layers thick. As a muscular non-absorptive tube, the oesophagus transports swallowed food to the stomach. The microvillae keep the oesophagus moist, trap mucus to lubricate passing food and protect the epithelium from food abrasion. Magnification unknown. Credit: STEVE GSCHMEISSNER / SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY.

An international journal of gastroenterology and hepatology

Impact Factor: 9.357

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ISSN: 0017-5749 (print)

ISSN: 1468-3288 (online)

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Gut is published by BMJ Publishing Group Ltd, typeset by TNQ Books & Journals, Chennai, India and printed in the UK on acid-free paper from sustainable forests by Latimer Trend & Co Ltd, Plymouth, UK

Gut (ISSN 0017-5749) is published monthly by BMJ Publishing Group and distributed in the USA by Mercury International Ltd. Periodicals postage paid at Rahway, NJ. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Gut, Mercury International Ltd, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ, 07001, USA.

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