Book Reviews

P. Frühmorgen and M. Classen (eds.): Endoskopie und Biopsie in der Gastroenterologie. Technik und Indikation. Springer, Berlin 1974. XII + 223 pp., 100 fig.; US $ 8.10/DM 19.80. The need of a manual of gastrointestinal endoscopy results from the fact that these methods are no more only complementary examinations used for verification of unclear or equivocal X-ray findings but a part of routine gastroenterological diagnostics. Many monographs on gastrointestinal endoscopy have lastly appeared but they dealt mostly only with one method or one aspect of the problem. This manual includes the whole extent of questions pertaining to the planning, preparation and performance of endoscopy, biopsy and cytology in gastroenterology. Old, as well as quite new methods, such as duodenoscopy, cholangiopancreatography, coloscopy, enteroscopy and therapeutic endoscopy are included. The chapters are written by a team of 16 specialists who not only possess an extensive experience but also know how to report it in a simple and instructive way. Reading is facilitated by a number of instructive schemes, e.g., as to planning of endoscopic rooms, purchasing the instruments, documenting the findings, etc. A limited number of important references, mostly from the sphere of the authors, are added. This booklet may be recommended as a basic manual of gastroenterological endoscopy.

Z. Maratka, Prague

A.N. Smith (ed.): Diverticular Disease. Clinics in Gastroenterology, vol. 4/1. Saunders, London 1975. 224 pp.; $ 6.00. This volume of a well-established series gives an excellent summary of the present state of knowledge about a very common disease in the western world. After an historical survey, the results of studies of colonic motility and pressure in health and disease are presented and connected with ideas on pathogenetic mechanisms in diverticular disease, considering its interesting geographical distribution. There is a good distinction between facts and hypotheses. An excellent presentation of the pathology, stressing the muscle abnormality, is followed by a clinical description of the disease and its possible complications. There is a short chapter on the use of radiology and endoscopy in diagnosing diverticular disease of the colon. Medical management, and most important, indications for surgical intervention are dealt with in detail by several authors who indicate that differences of opinion continue to exist. Finally, results of experimental work with rabbits, connected with topics in earlier chapters, conclude this extensive survey. Apart from giving an up-to-date presentation of current knowledge about the different aspects of diverticular disease of the colon, one of the merits of this volume is to show how new hypotheses have stimulated interest and research in a rather neglected area. This is also reflected in the well-chosen references. The chapters on surgical treatment of patients are largely based on personal experience and presented in a clear manner. Gastroenterologists, as well as clinicians and surgeons interested in gastroenterology, will profit from reading this comprehensive presentation of current thinking on diverticular disease of the colon. H. Fahrländer, Basel

A fair amount is known about the exocrine secretion of the pancreas and its relationship with impaired digestion; less is known, however, about the control of secretion in relation to nutritional stimuli and in particular in relation to phenomena of adaptation. Moreover, recently also the problem of nutritional induction of various enzymes, i.e., specific and unspecific induction, was brought up.

The entire complex of these problems is dealt with by the authors from the experimental as well as clinical aspects. The findings of enzyme adaptation to the type of diet have, as compared with older work, several priorities. The authors use for instance the model of fasting and glucose infusion in experimental animals, and the model of intermittent fasting etc., which indicate that during the long-term administration of a nutrient (sugar) enzymatic adaptation in the pancreas develops.

Investigations in animals were supplemented by investigations in volunteers where adaptation develops only after a longer time interval (2-3 weeks). They conclude from their experiments that adaptation develops as a result of stimulation of intestinal nervous chemoreceptors by foods as well as by metabolic breakdown products – carbohydrate, lipid and amino acid substances – which act even when administered by the parenteral route.

It is not possible to record all ideas of this monograph in a brief review. It is important to appreciate also the excellent documentation and tables as well as the excellent electron microphotographs, though only a small selection could be published. The book will arouse, no doubt, the interest it deserves among gastroenterologists, nutritionists, dietitians and internists who want to obtain more detailed knowledge. The monograph is in Slovak but with extensive English and Russian summary.

/ Masek, Prague


This completely new edition of the Handbook of Internal Medicine is the first to be printed in English. It offers, at present, the most extensive coverage of all the different aspects of the normal and pathological esophagus, and it is an invaluable source of references in this field covering the important old and new literature up to 1971/72, in some chapters up to 1973. This volume is not only a guide for the esophageal specialist, be it gastroenterologist, internist, orlaryngologist, or thoracic surgeon, but also for those who are looking for a precise introduction into the clinical and scientific problems of esophagology. The text is written in fluent English and fascinates the reader like an excellent textbook. Nevertheless, the clear design of this series of handbooks has been maintained with numerous headings and subheadings which greatly facilitate orientation.

Major parts of the book have been written by well-known specialists from Leuven in Belgium, but also many other esophagologists from America and Europe have contributed important chapters. Drs. Vantrappen and Hellemans are to be congratulated for their editorial work which has produced a well-balanced book and prevented major reduplications.

The volume includes detailed chapters on the anatomy and physiology of the esophagus, introducing the reader into the mechanisms of disease, on diagnostic procedures, on motility disturbances, on tumors, on inflammatory lesions, on esophageal varices, on the various other congenital and acquired organic diseases and on the involvement of the esophagus in systemic diseases. Although most authors, according to the character of the
handbook, give an overview over controversial points, they do not forget to be critical in their approach. This new volume certainly will set standards for many years despite of the rather rapid evolution, at present, in some areas of esophagology. It should be present in every medical library. Unfortunately, the price of the book is rather prohibitive for many individuals, although it certainly can be explained by the excellent quality of print and paper and by the ample illustration including many outstanding reproductions of X-rays.

M. Wienbeck, Düsseldorf


Not every new drug has the luck to attract so much attention as does this semisyn-thetic brand of liquorice. In this monograph (in German) the biochemistry and pharmacology of carbenoxolon are discussed thoroughly; moreover its use in therapy, results and side-effects are referred to briefly. The therapeutical effect is probably due to the increase in viscosity, cohesiveness and adhesiveness of gastric mucus which in turn is due to the increase in the contents of N-acetylneuramine acid (NANA). The major part of the book discusses the effect of carbenoxolon on gastric mucus on the basis of extensive biochemical, histo-chemical and electron-optical studies, well documented by excellent partly coloured micro-photographs. In summary carbenoxolon is appreciated as a drug that efficiently contributes to the treatment of experimental as well as clinical peptic lesions.

This monograph gives an exhaustive review of the pharmacology of carbenoxolon; it does not bring original results of treatment in humans, it only ventures the opinion that this drug is efficacious in the therapy of acute attack of gastric and duodenal ulcer, especially in out-patients, but does not influence the basic ulcerative disease, i.e. its periodic recurrences. The perfectly edited book is an important contribution to the physiology of gastric mucus and will be of more interest to physiologists and pharmacologists than to physicians treating peptic ulcer disease.

Z. Maratka, Prague


This volume of a gastroenterological series for the practitioner and the hospital doctor with practical interest in diseases of the gastrointestinal tract gives a comprehensive review of our present knowledge in the field of hepatitis. The authors are all working in Switzerland and are all well-known gastroenterologists. Without giving a complete list of topics, a few shall be mentioned: epidemiology of infectious hepatitis, fulminant hepatitis, subacute necrotizing hepatitis, chronic hepatitis, extrahepatic manifestations of hepatitis, drug-induced forms of hepatitis, hepatitis in childhood and in pregnancy, immunologic findings, Australia antigen and its different aspects in diagnosis and epidemiology, aspects of therapy (controlled trials in the field). The booklet gives very worthful information for doctors working with patients who have liver disease, also for gastroenterologists. It is written in German, but an English translation would be of interest.

H. Goebell, Ulm

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No therapeutic agent of peptic ulcer has elicited so much interest as this synthetic derivate of licorice – this sentence introduces several articles of this publication. Four symposia in seven years with outstanding research workers from all continents dealt with pharmacology and clinical application of this exciting compound. This forth symposium was organized at the World Congress in Mexico by T. Hunt on a particularly high scientific level. In biochemical and pharmacological contributions it shows that carbenoxolone improves the defence mechanisms of gastric mucosa by stimulating the production of the mucus and increasing the concentration of substances which are of importance for its quality. It also counteracts the damaging back diffusion of H-ions which is particularly nocuous in the presence of acetylosalcyclic acid, bile and other irritants. It prolongs the life cycle of epithelial cells and contributes to healing of the ulcer. It has no effect on HC1 secretion but inactivates pepsin in the gastric lumen. New studies show an inhibitory effect on gastro-oesophageal reflux. These valuable properties unfortunately are accompanied – as it is the case in most efficient drugs – by unwanted side effects – fluid retention, hypertension, and lowering of serum potassium.

An extensive discussion was about the question whether its effect is local or systemic. The conclusion favours the concept that it is essentially local. Several controlled clinical studies have proved that the therapeutical effect in gastric ulcer is unequivocal; the effect in duodenal ulcer seems to depend on the condition that the drug is released in the duodenum in sufficient efficacy and concentration. This may be achieved by a ‘positioned-release capsule’.

From the whole monograph it is apparent that the importance of carbenoxolone in the therapy of the ulcer – at least gastric ulcer – is now generally acknowledged. As a matter of fact, this drug has been honoured by being included in a basic therapeutical triad: bed rest, stopping smoking and carbenoxolone (Doll). There is practically no mention of deglycyrrhizinated derivates of licorice which have also been popular in the treatment of peptic ulcer.

A high level of all contributions, perfect editorial work, authoritative review articles by F.A. Jones and T. Hunt and including discussions after individual papers characterize this publication that is interesting and useful not only as a report of an exciting compound but also as a contribution to physiology of the stomach and pathology of ulcer disease.

Z. Mafatka, Prague