
Extrahepatic biliary atresia, neonatal hepatitis and intrahepatic biliary atresia are three pathological entities that are usually interpreted as being due to agenesis and aplasia of the bile ducts. In this monograph the author presents his opinion according to which this ‘triad’ has a common pathogenesis resulting from an acquired defect of inflammatory origin. The increasing incidence of these conditions leads him to believe that they are result of viral infection by a teratogenic hepatotropic virus during an expanding endemiy of viral hepatitis. He analyses thoroughly and in detail the clinical and pathological picture on the basis of 26 cases. Great care has been given to the style and form of presentation; the text is well arranged, and lucidly broken up by different types of characters. Printing is on two kinds of paper to enable perfect reproduction of black and white and coloured pictures. The subject is too special, and a critical appraisal of the author’s hypothesis will be possible only by a limited number of specialists. However, all paediatricians and hepatologists may draw profit from this well thought of and edited monograph.

Z. Mafatka, Prague


Acute liver failure in so far healthy people is a relatively infrequent dramatic emergency, usually following viral, toxic or drug-induced hepatitis. Its pathophysiology is not quite clear, particularly the cause of encephalopathy is not well understood. The goal of this monograph is to evaluate the present therapeutic measures. The conservative management is of little efficacy, that is why the interest is focused on ‘heroic procedures’ such as: exchange transfusion, plasmapheresis, extracorporeal liver perfusion, cross circulation, temporary auxiliary liver transplantation, hemodialysis, hemoperfusion and total body washout. These methods are discussed in detail by nine specialists, the editor himself being the author of the introduction and the chapter on transplantation. All articles are highly expert, well-organized, with exhaustive bibliography. This is an authoritative achievement in this branch of hepatology, well organized and edited.

Z. Mafatka, Prague


This book fills a gap in German literature. The cooperation of 30 experienced clinicians and basic science specialists has created a concentrated, modern and critical review of our present knowledge about the oesophagus. Introductory chapters deal with the functional anatomy, physiology and pharmacology of the gullet. Evaluation of clinical symptoms,
radiology, endoscopy, manometry, acid perfusion and pH recording are very precisely explained in the following diagnostic chapters. Especially the pages about the basic aspects and the clinical application of oesophageal manometry are superb. The broadest space is naturally given to the description of clinical aspects of the functional disorders of the oesophagus: disorders of the upper oesophageal sphincter, diffuse spasm, achalasia, diverticula, hiatal hernia, medical, radiological and surgical problems of gastrooesophageal reflux, Barrett’s syndrome, disturbances of oesophageal motility in diabetes, neurological diseases and myopathy, the effects of collagen disease (especially scleroderma), tumor growth and operations on oesophageal function and, finally, paediatric oesophagology. Despite the large number of authors, a clear and organized presentation is maintained throughout the book. Only rarely is there an overlap in the contents of the chapters and even then, the different viewpoints of the authors add to the actuality of the text. The references concentrate on modern literature up to 1976. Therefore, anybody wishing to pursue an aspect of oesophagology in more detail will find the most pertinent recent publications cited. This makes the book very attractive not only to clinicians, but also to those doing research in this area. Internists, surgeons, radiologists, paediatricians, otolaryngologists and especially gastro-enterologists will appreciate the practical guidelines to common clinical problems and also to specialized procedures. The pathophysiologic approach to oesophageal disorders, although controversial in some regards, helps to make the recommended diagnostic and therapeutic steps more logical. Some minor errors should be eliminated in a second edition, e.g. the incorrect numbering of the references in chapter 11, the wrong location of parts a and b in fig. 9, chapter 17, and the partly incorrect page numbering on arrhythmias in the index. In summary, the German literature in this book sets new standards in the long-neglected area of oesophagology and, thus, is worth its (unfortunately rather high) price. M. Wienbeck, Düsseldorf