

## Book reviews

**Clinical Chemical Pathology**, 8th edition. By C. H. Gray and P. J. N. Howorth. (Pp. vi + 245; illustrated; paper-back £3.50; boards £7.00.) London: Edward Arnold. 1977.

The popularity of this small book on clinical chemical pathology is obvious when it is realised that it was originally published in 1953 and is now in its eighth edition.

The chapters on calcium, phosphorus, and bone disease, renal function, and gastrointestinal tract and endocrine disease have been completely re-written, while others on acid-base balance and plasma proteins (including the immunoglobulins) have been subjected to a substantial revision. Throughout the book SI units only are used except, for example, on page 180 where the oestrogen level is expressed in the more traditional  $\mu\text{g}/24$  hours.

In a book of this size it is impossible to discuss all topics in detail, and this is more apparent in some chapters than in others; for example, the gastrointestinal hormones are dealt with in a cursory fashion although this is a branch of the subject that is

developing quickly. In the chapter on **Biochemical Tests in Endocrine Disease**, there is no index of the range of values to be expected for oestrogen, FSH, LH, and progesterone during a normal menstrual cycle, while hyperprolactinaemia is discussed without any indication of the influence of emotion and drugs on the normal level.

These minor criticisms apart, the authors are to be congratulated on the way they have encompassed the field of chemical pathology in a pocket-sized book that will be of use to the student and the practising doctor in the ward and the laboratory.

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**Pathology of the Gastro-intestinal Tract: Current Topics in Pathology**. Volume 63. Edited by B. C. Morson. (Pp. vi + 356; DM 96, \$39.40.) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1976.

This is an important book. It grasps some of the nettles that repeatedly sting pathologists who work with gastroenterologists—such as the diagnosis of early gastric cancer, the significance of

polyps in the large intestine, and the precarcinomatous phase of ulcerative colitis. Another chapter classifies gastric polyps from which endoscopists take tiny biopsy specimens leaving the pathologist uninformed and confused by the imperfectly preserved postmortem specimens and the inadequate biopsy tissue from living patients that he examines. The other five chapters are concerned with coeliac disease, tumour-associated antigens, mucin histochemistry, the gastrointestinal endocrine system, and immunological aspects; all are interesting and have practical importance. One of the messages that comes over clearly is of the steady production of new knowledge, much of which is highly significant in the management of patients. The work and influence of Basil Morson can be seen overtly and by reading between the lines, and his editing of this multi-author work into well subdivided, easily read sections is highly successful despite minor bibliographical errors in one of the chapters. Although not cheap, this book can be recommended to most histopathologists and to all their trainees as a proper charge upon their departmental library budgets.

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