

## Management of Common Gastroenterological Problems—A Malaysia & Singapore Perspective (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)

edited by Richard Guan Yong-Choon, Kang Jin-Yong, Ng Han Seong, Ismail Merican

published by Havas MediMedia, Singapore 2000

313 pages, available from Havas MediMedia at S\$25

The third edition of this manual of gastroenterology by regional experts from Malaysia and Singapore consists of 27 short chapters packaged in 2 sections entitled “Luminal gastroenterology” and “Hepatobiliary & Pancreas.” In his preface, the editor, Dr Richard Guan, states that “our goal is to provide a resource for primary care physicians and non-gastroenterological specialists in the diagnosis and management of common gastroenterological problems.” Dr Guan points out that “all the chapters have been revised to reflect the advances in gastroenterology over the last 5 years.”

Three new chapters on abnormal liver function test, gallstone disease and gastroenterology in the East and West have been added. Also, most chapters have been extensively revised to reflect current thinking and describe new techniques.

How well does this book address its stated goal? It would be easy to criticise its “cook-book” approach, especially when there is an overlap on the management of jaundice or the approach to gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding. However, it is clearly stated in the Preface that this manual provides “a quick reference, to help local doctors to diagnose and treat patients more efficiently and confidently.” It does not pretend to be a comprehensive gastroenterology text.

The authors have adhered to a standard format that makes for easy reading. Indications, contraindications, preparation, algorithms are clearly laid out. This will appeal to busy medical students, housemen and other physicians in training, for whom time is precious. References and recommended reading lists are provided for those who require them. Thus, each chapter is comprehensive on its own.

As expected in a multi-author text, there is considerable variation in the quality of the chapters. Some are quite outstanding (e.g. chapter 15, Treatment of chronic hepatitis; and chapter 21, Drugs and the liver). The overall standard is good. Of course, one can take issue with technical points here and there. For example, the Tensilon test is seldom used to provoke non-cardiac chest pain (yield less than 20%) while colonic air insufflation to test irritable bowel is not conclusive. For variceal bleeding, balloon tamponade has largely been superseded by endoscopic intervention while T.I.P.S.S. is still not widely available.

There are 2 chapters on parasitology and gastroenteritis by Malaysian authors while the chapter on Cancers is written by a senior oncologist. There are also 2 excellent chapters by surgeons on the acute abdomen and laparoscopic surgery. The chapter on ERCP would benefit from some additional line drawings to explain the text.

The book ends with a very nice chapter entitled “Gastroenterology in the East and West”, a concise yet comprehensive overview of the major differences between the spectra of diseases experienced in the East and Britain.

Overall, this is a very useful book. It contains a wealth of information and common sense in a compact form. I believe that Dr Guan and his co-authors have achieved their goal. I was the author of one of the chapters.

Cheng Jun, *FRCPEd, FAMS*