The fifth edition of *Advanced Therapy in Gastroenterology and Liver Disease*, co-edited by Drs. Bayless and Diehl provides a comprehensive review of both common and uncommon gastrointestinal diseases in adults and children. This single-volume text is an excellent resource for gastrointestinal trainees, endoscopy nurses and technicians, and also offers information on new and controversial treatment modalities that will benefit the practicing gastroenterologist.

The book is well organized and well written. There are 144 chapters that encompass both organic and functional gastrointestinal disorders. Each of these chapters is intended as a mini-consultation with a focus upon current management. Chapters are succinct, ranging from 3–5 pages per topic, but do offer detailed information on treatment modalities. Topics can be addressed effectively in this short format by limiting discussion regarding clinical presentation and diagnosis. Each chapter provides practical information on evidence-based management of disorders, including medical therapy, endoscopic and radiologic intervention, and surgery. The authors offer personal recommendations and are supported by select notes from the editors as well as a list of supplemental readings. Easy to comprehend logarithms are outlined for disorders that may be more challenging to treat (e.g., gastroesophageal reflux disease), require surveillance (Barrett’s esophagus and ulcerative colitis), and malignancies (e.g., esophageal cancer and gastrinoma). The illustrations in the book are easy to interpret and of good quality. There are 260 contributing authors, drawn from across the globe, who span the spectrum of pertinent specialties, including not only gastroenterology, but also hepatology, surgery and radiology. They provide a truly international perspective, writing from diverse countries including Hong Kong, Israel, Mexico, Canada, England and Germany as well as the United States.

The book includes comprehensive and detailed sections on esophageal, and gastrointestinal disorders, including GERD and its complications, acute and obscure gastrointestinal bleeding, inflammatory bowel disease (with a discussion on the management of pregnant and pediatric patients), gastrointestinal allergic disorders and intolerances (including celiac disease and lactose intolerance), infectious gastrointestinal disorders and gastrointestinal malignancies. The sections on hepatology disorders include detailed reviews of infectious, metabolic and cholestatic liver diseases, and chapters on liver transplantation in adults and children. Common gallbladder, biliary and pancreatic disorders are discussed, with a focus on endoscopic and surgical management.

In spite of its small size, this text does succeed in covering a large number of diverse topics, and these are generally discussed in sufficient depth to offer real benefit for the practitioner. Yet, the complex process of collecting reviews and editing a text necessarily excludes therapies developed within the last few years. For example, although newer endoscopic treatment methods are discussed prominently, the book fails to touch upon double balloon enteroscopy in diagnosis and treatment of obscure gastrointestinal bleeding. Similarly, while ablation of Barrett’s esophagus is described by multiple methods, including ablation with argon plasma coagulation and photodynamic therapy, there is no description of radiofrequency ablation in the esophagus. For the most current therapies, the academic physician, researcher and advanced trainee will continue to require on-line sources and literature searches.

There are several miscellaneous topics covered in the book, that are worthy of mention, including the role of evidence-based medicine and decision analysis in gastrointestinal disorders. The sections on endoscopic sedation and disinfection are a good resource and practical guide for endoscopists, endoscopy nurses, and technicians alike. The chapters on eating disorders are well written, with useful information for gastroenterologists and primary care physicians alike. The impact of smoking on various gastrointestinal disorders, approach to the treatment of alcoholism and its medical consequences, and complementary and alternative medicine in gastrointestinal disorders, are well outlined in separate chapters. The book includes a comprehensive review of intestinal and multivisceral transplantation, with a discussion of the indications, evaluation of potential candidates, techniques, postoperative management and potential complications.

In summary, this unique text continues to offer...
value in its fifth edition as a compendium of succinct treatises on therapy for gastroenterology and hepatology disorders. Although there are now many competing resources available on-line, the practitioner who wishes to have a readable single text offering pragmatic and current advice will be pleased to own this combined text and CD reference.

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Gastrointestinal Microbiology
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This is a multi-authored book consisting of twenty chapters, written by 45 internationally known current researchers in microbiology, nutrition, public health, Veterinary Medicine and related fields. It contains over 2,000 references—nearly half of them since the year 2000, and is edited by two well known, respected and published authors in microbiology and probiotics.

The text reads well with each chapter providing the reader with an unusually helpful introduction and conclusion statements. This, therefore, is not the microbiology text that we became so familiar with during our medical school training and does not tell you “more than you ever wanted to know” about the 400–500 species of bacteria that inhabit our gut. Instead it focuses on those organisms (Bifidobacterium, Lactobacillus, Clostridia, Bacteroides and several others) that impact on GI metabolism, digestion, nutrition, immunity, and drug response. In addition, evidence is presented that these organisms may also play a major role in the pathogenesis of inflammatory bowel disease and colorectal cancer.

Early chapters are devoted to new molecular technology and applications including 16S rRNA gene analyses used for cultivation independent assessment of bacterial diversity and density of GI flora (now called microbiota). Comparisons with time honored culture and sampling techniques are reviewed. Applying this information subsequent chapters describe the development of our normal GI microbiota in infancy, the adult, and changes of the elderly, the allergic infant, patients with inflammatory bowel disease, colorectal cancer. Additional chapters detail the modulation effects by prebiotics, probiotics, and antibiotics.

Born germ free animals and In Vitro models of the GIT are described and their role as research tools discussed. Lastly, chapters on the microbiota of cats, dogs and farm animals are included. One contributing author noted, as of 2006, all growth promoting animal and poultry feed antibiotics will be banned in the European Union. Many clinicians are unaware that up to 70 percent of all antibiotics used in the USA are not for human use but given as growth supplements to farm animals— which have a direct impact on the resistant organisms (Salmonella, Campylobacter, and enterococci) now seen on the feed lot and occasionally in agricultural workers and their families (1,2,3). Evidence presented in the later chapters on use of some pre-and probiotics in combination—producing a synergistic affect on animal microbiota similar to that provided by antibiotics is noted. This observation may provide a future avenue for possible safer and natural occurring feed alternatives.

I found this to be an interesting book which reads well with more of a story line development than a medical text book format. The illustrations and tables are informative. Throughout its chapters, there is some repetition and overlap of information secondary to the explosion of new information in this field. The book appears not to be targeted to the clinician, though in almost all chapters “pearls” are found which, though not directly applicable to the bedside, are valuable in the cognitive process of approaching clinical disease problems. Instead this book appears to be an up to date reference source and overview “jump start to quickly get up to speed” for the young post graduate student entering the field of gastrointestinal microbiology.

Potential conflicts of interest. DCL: no conflicts.

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