In general, all the procedures are well described and the illustrations are clear and to the point. Included in each chapter are sections outlining the indications for the procedure as well as details of the contra-indications, complications, etc.

Mr Scott does not suggest that merely by reading the book one can become adept at a procedure. However, this book will provide a great deal of help for young doctors who, in an emergency situation, may be faced with having to attempt an invasive, investigative/therapeutic procedure with which they are not entirely familiar.

Inevitably, people will regret the absence of descriptions of the procedures and, as someone who works in emergency medicine, I should have liked to have seen sections on such things as intraosseous infusions, cutdowns, regional nerve blocks, diagnostic peritoneal lavage, etc. Unfortunately, however, there is no doubt that to be completely comprehensive Mr Scott would have needed to produce a book three times the size of the one which is presently available.

Mr Scott has made a very good selection and his book can be strongly recommended for all junior hospital doctors and many general practitioners. Certainly my copy is already being read by members of the junior staff who have commended the accessibility of the information and its usefulness.

This book brings together contributions from eminent surgeons in England, Europe and the USA to produce a state of the art textbook for minimal access general surgery.

Each chapter is written by an established authority and deals with a different laparoscopic procedure. Although each contribution stands on its own, when taken together a rounded view of the subject is obtained. Laparoscopic appendicectomy is described in detail in two separate contributions but there is surprisingly little repetition in the book as a whole. It would have been interesting to have a longer section on laparoscopic colonic surgery and a chapter on the current state of instrumentation and its proposed development would be useful.

The exciting historical review and the chapter on laparoscopic hernia repair are perhaps the high spots of this comprehensive volume which is a cornerstone for those with an interest in this rapidly expanding specialty.

In molecular biology, the book succeeds as such basic cardiology life support with all which doctors should be familiar, to others which fall into more specialised areas such as peritoneal dialysis.

Molecular biology of digestive disease


Molecular technology has expanded the horizons of all parts of medical practice in an extraordinary way during the 1980s and the revolution will continue. Gastroenterology has not been spared from these advances although clinical practice has been little affected so far. This is about to change and the purpose of this book is to acquaint clinical gastroenterologists with the science of molecular biology in relation to potential areas of gastroenterological interest. Dr Quirke and his authors, largely derived from Leeds, have concentrated on oncology, infection and genetics but Professor Williamson contributes a short piece on gene therapy at the end. Does the book succeed? I am not sure, but at least there are some useful contributions which should be of great help to a clinician trying hard to understand what all the new science is about. The chapter by Foster and Thomas on the hepatitis B virus and how mutants arise, and that on colorectal neoplasia by Scott and Quirke are excellent.

Other chapters are uneven — either providing too much detail or being rather facile to the point of ‘talking down’ to the reader or, worse still, reading as if it were written for publication in a Sunday newspaper.

This book is about molecular biology and its language and concepts. To overcome this, a glossary of terms is provided and this is outstandingly good. My only comment would be that this should have introduced the book as a chapter on the techniques rather than just brief definitions.

To sum up, this book is well worth reading by anyone who is struggling to understand the contributions that molecular science is making to clinical gastroenterology. The best chapter will stimulate and inform such readers. Its brevity and cheapness are additional attributes.

Medical procedures


Mr Scott has put together a very useful small textbook which will fit nicely into the pocket of a white coat. Twenty-five of the most frequently undertaken procedures are discussed in appropriate depth by authors who obviously have wide experience of the techniques they are describing. These vary from straightforward things, such as basic cardiopulmonary life support with all which doctors should be familiar, to others which fall into more specialised areas such as peritoneal dialysis.