



# GASTROINTESTINAL DISEASE

Pathophysiology • Diagnosis • Management

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W. B. SAUNDERS COMPANY  
*Philadelphia | London | Toronto | 1973*

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W. B. Saunders Company: West Washington Square  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19105

12 Dyott Street  
London, WC1A 1DB

833 Oxford Street  
Toronto 18, Ontario

Gastrointestinal Disease: Pathophysiology, Diagnosis, Management

ISBN 0-7216-8363-0

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Print No.: 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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# Foreword

Textbooks serve as the foundations of medical knowledge. On the basic facts and broad overview that they provide, the student erects a framework of ideas with pieces of information culled from the pluralistic system of medical pedagogy: lectures, clinics, medical journals, audio tapes, video cassettes, and informal chit-chat. Finally, with his ever-accumulating clinical experience, he completes the conceptual structure that serves him in the exercise of his profession.

Seen in such a context, a good textbook does not depend on exhaustive detail, the nuances of diagnosis and management, or even the immediacy of its particulars, all of which are to be found in the complementary sources of information. Crucial, however, are the organization, substantiality, specificity, and accessibility of the contents. Organization must facilitate the reader's understanding, the facts marshaled should express a reasonable consensus, the penchant for convenient vaguenesses (e.g., "not infrequently," "in most cases") should be contained, and—most important, although as a rule neglected—the subject matter should be effectively indexed. In these days of sophisticated indexing and retrieval systems, a fat tome crammed with valuable data that cannot readily be found is inexcusable.

The organization of this Sleisenger-Fordtran gastroenterologic text, with a clinical section in conventional organ system arrangement preceded by a section on pathophysiology, is designed to foster understanding. Moreover, the editors appear sensitive to today's demand for relevance and practicality. Instead of beginning the volume with an analysis of molecular interaction, they have placed first a chapter written by that dean of colon-ology, Dr. Thomas Almy, on the effect of stress on gut function. The reader thus will not have to hunt in the back pages, where the subject is conventionally buried, to find a general discussion of the alimentary tract disorders that are by far the most common.

Another commendable feature is the editors' enterprise in putting out a basic book on gastroenterology that really deals with the gut and leaves out the liver. A number of excellent textbooks on the liver are already available, but there is a relative dearth of convenient foundation books describing the alimentary tract and its disorders. Eliminating the liver permits the editors to describe, without skimping on essentials, an organ system that, like a newly found continent, is rapidly being opened up by the new means of exploration provided by immunology, endocrinology, peroral biopsy, and fiberoptics. Pediatric gastroenterology, a long neglected field, receives its due share of page space. Broad concepts as well as the minutiae of clinical manifestations are appropriately elaborated, and adequate coverage of the



basic alimentary tract phenomena—secretion, digestion, absorption, and motility—is possible.

The organization of this textbook thus augurs well: it will serve its ordained purpose of providing students with the essential foundations of gastroenterology, and the "students" served will range, as the editors hope, from the first-year matriculant in medical school to the experienced specialist.

FRANZ J. INGELFINGER

# Acknowledgments Preface

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The arrangement of material and its manner of presentation in this book are based upon two principles in which the Editors believe. The first is that excellence in medical practice depends upon an understanding of medical science and that clinical advances are made for the most part along scientific routes. The second is that diseases and deranged physiological states should be critically appraised and evaluated prior to describing the disorder to any professional audience. In our view, there is no longer any justification in clinical medicine for anecdotal attitudes, and long-held views must be subjected to critical reappraisal.

Another of our guiding principles has been that all material important in the study of a clinical discipline can be written simultaneously for students at all levels—from the medical student to the accomplished and trained specialist. Hence, this work contains in a clinical context much of what is important in gastrointestinal physiology and pathophysiology and much that reflects the contributions of pathology and radiology. The more strictly clinical aspects of gastroenterology with which the practitioner, pediatrician, and surgeon are intimately concerned are critically presented. Description of clinical disease (diagnosis and management, particularly) is authoritative only insofar as the facts will permit. Statements are documented and uncertainties emphasized.

Finally, we hope to encourage a healthy skepticism and a thirst for new knowledge in the art and science of gastroenterology. Without this, students and physicians will become satisfied with the ambiguities of clinical medicine.

MARVIN H. SLEISINGER

JOHN S. FORDTRAN

# Acknowledgments

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First of all, we are most grateful to our friends who are also the contributors to this book for their professional expertise and for their cheerful willingness to meet our exacting deadlines. In a very real sense this book is their achievement as well as ours. Particular thanks are due to Drs. Lloyd L. Brandborg, Robert M. Donaldson, Jr., Henry I. Goldberg, James E. McGuigan, James H. Meyer, Charles E. Pope II, and Jerry S. Trier, for effective consultation and beautiful source material, and to Dr. Murray Davidson for helping us include pediatric disorders.

Another special word of gratitude goes to Nancy Stiening, our editorial assistant, whose contribution and devotion to this text from its inception have been invaluable.

Numerous of our colleagues have aided us greatly by their constant professional encouragement and support; among them, we would like especially to thank Drs. John M. Dietschy, Daniel W. Foster, Floyd C. Rector, Rudi Schmid, Donald W. Seldin, and Lloyd H. Smith, Jr.

For excellent secretarial assistance, including tasks as diverse as typing, editorial help, and packing of manuscripts, we thank Yolanda Calloway, Eva Fruit, Jean Harber, Margaret Warren, and Carolyn Wickwire.

For care and forbearance of the domestic variety, we are proud to acknowledge the aid of our wives, Lenore Sleisenger and Jewel Fordtran, and of our children, Tom Sleisenger and Bill, Bess, Joey, and Amy Fordtran.

And last but not least, we thank those devoted "pros" at the W. B. Saunders Company, John Dusseau, Ray Kersey, Dave Kilmer, and Herb Powell.

MARVIN H. SLEISENGER

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