BOOK REVIEWS

Prevention of Stress Bleeding in Critically Ill Patients: A new concept

Thieme Medical Publishers Inc., New York, 1988. 162 pp. £34.95

This 162 page book comprises 22 papers presented at a multidisciplinary workshop held in Hannover, East Germany in June 1986 on the clinical aspects of stress ulceration and bleeding in the upper gastrointestinal tract.

The first paper gives an outline of the structure, actions and mucosal protective effects of sucralfate, a new sulphated disaccharide. Subsequent articles review the history and development of the use of antacids, histamine (2) receptor antagonists, sucralfate and another new agent, pirenzepine which is a gastric mucosal muscarine receptor antagonist. Numerous comparisons are given of one treatment versus another with the final paper providing a good summary of the effects and complications of each type of treatment.

This is a useful compendium of references and source material for the researcher but has little clinical relevance to the Accident and Emergency Department other than demonstrating the importance of avoiding pulmonary aspiration. Provided the book is available at modest cost (less than £35), it will be a useful addition to an Intensive Care Unit library.

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The Right Test. A Physician's Guide to Laboratory Medicine

C. E. SPEICHER.

W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia, 1989. 174 pp. £13.95

Medical decision making and resource management are two topics that preoccupy the minds of many in the health service today and highlight the need for protocols giving guidelines on the use of laboratory tests. Given the number of test procedures available and the complexity of the clinical situations to which they are applied, the production of such protocols is a daunting task. Professor Speicher has shown how it might be done, although his book is, of course, more than a brief protocol. The amount of information he has managed to compress into a work of this size is impressive, particularly as he covers investigations from all