day-in, day-out care of his or her patients. However, individuals involved in the care of patients with kidney disease should be encouraged to read this book. This includes not only physicians, but all individuals involved with patients whether it be dialysis, transplant, pre-dialysis, or pre-transplant. In any disease where a cure does not exist, it is essential that health care providers maintain an awareness of how both the treatment and disease affect the patient as a person.

MARTIN J. SCHREIBER, JR., M.D.
Department of Hypertension and Nephrology
The Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Lecture Notes on the Liver, by R. Thompson (Blackwell).

Lecture Notes on the Liver is a monogram, which, as the title implies, covers a variety of subjects related to the liver through the form of short clinical notes. The book is composed of 18 chapters. Each chapter is divided into short paragraphs written in a clear, concise style with representative schematic drawings. This format, while rather attractive to the reader, leads unfortunately to many repetitions. Clinical concepts may be reinforced through the force of repetition, but in this instance, it results sometimes in confusion. For instance, postoperative jaundice is called "surgery and jaundice" in chapter 2 and is given as an example of renal toxicity. In chapter 7, it is referred to as "postoperative jaundice" and the emphasis is on halothane toxicity and postoperative cholestasis due to poor hepatic perfusion. A unifying concept of the syndrome is lacking. On the other hand, I found the brevity of the style to be quite effective in other areas such as the section on "diseases that do not cause cirrhosis" at the end of the chapter about cirrhosis, and with the classification of tumors of the biliary tract.

There are very few controversial statements in the book, but the treatment of pruritus with 60 to 180 mg of phenobarbital a day would certainly cause an argument with many gastroenterologists. Some important clinical points are missing, such as the ratio of SGOT to SGPT in alcoholic hepatitis and the absence of any advice on when to treat chronic autoimmune active hepatitis. Finally, I did not find the chapter dealing with drug toxicity to be very helpful. The classification of predictable and unpredictable hepatotoxins is not clinically relevant.

The general presentation of *Lecture Notes on the Liver* is quite good. The printing is adequate and there are very few misspelled words. The subdivision of chapters is very helpful. However, it is sometimes difficult to follow the sequence when more than four different subtitles are used in one paragraph. Finally, the number of references is very small. This is obviously a conscious choice that the author has made, but it makes the monogram less attractive to internists and gastroenterologists and limits the audience to medical students.

EDGAR ACHKAR, M.D.
Department of Gastroenterology
The Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Asthma: Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutic Progress, ed by A. B. Kay (Blackwell).

With increasing use of bronchial provocation challenge, bronchial asthma is being diagnosed at a greater frequency. Along with this, many asthma-precipitating factors have also been recognized. However, to date, the exact pathophysiological mechanism behind the different types of asthma is not yet fully understood. This book is an up-to-date compilation of knowledge regarding mechanisms of asthma at the cellular level. An attempt has been made to show the therapeutic actions of the various bronchodilators based on pathophysiology.

The book will best serve the interest of research pharmacists who are studying bronchodilators. For the allergist and pulmonologist who are actively involved in caring for asthma patients, this book provides a better understanding of the disease and its remedies. It also addresses the area in future investigation in reference to asthma management. Those chapters entitled "Bronchoalveolar Lavage and the Late Asthmatic Reactions" and "Leucotriens" are outstanding.

In light of the book's strengths, it would be hypercritical to point out the flaws. Nevertheless, some of the chapters dealing with mechanism of drug action at the cellular level go into much detail which, although necessary, might be too much for a clinician's primary interest. I would also like to see conclusions at the end of all chapters, rather than just selected ones. Occupational asthma would definitely be beyond the scope of this book, but more detail on exercise-induced and noctural asthma would add to the strength of this work.

Asthma is an excellent review of the scientific basis of asthma therapy by a highly qualified international faculty. It is very well written and includes key schematic diagrams, which simplify the difficult concepts in a clear-cut fashion. Tables and pictures are appropriately placed and serve their purpose. The extensive reference list is the hidden treasure of this book.

When major therapeutic advancement in asthma management is longed for, this book could be a valuable reference for the professionals taking part in the management of bronchial asthma.

ATUL C. MEHTA, M.D.
Department of Pulmonary Disease
The Cleveland Clinic Foundation