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1 Lindor KD, Bru C, Jorgensen RA, *et al.* The role of ultrasonography and automatic-needle biopsy in outpatient percutaneous liver biopsy. *Hepatology* 1996;23:1079-83.

Guidelines for the management of iron deficiency anaemia

EDITOR.—In reply to Dr Scott's letter (*Gut* 2001;48:284), I would add that when iron deficiency coexists with the anaemia of chronic disorders (ACD) such as rheumatoid arthritis, a low transferrin saturation loses its diagnostic specificity due to the fact that comparable degrees of transferrin saturation occur in patients with the sole diagnosis of ACD.¹ The corollary, in this context, is that the behaviour of ferritin as an acute phase reactant negates the expected fall in serum ferritin, with consequent loss of sensitivity in this parameter.¹ Even so, in a comparison of bone marrow findings with tests such as transferrin saturation and serum ferritin in a study comprising patients with a variety of haematological disorders, "the most useful single variable to discriminate patients with iron deficiency from all other patients was serum ferritin".² Since then, the most promising test for identifying iron deficiency when it coexists with chronic inflammation has been the ratio of serum transferrin receptor/log serum ferritin (so-called TfR-F index), which achieves an unequivocal separation between iron deficient patients with coexisting chronic inflammation compared with those with the sole diagnosis of chronic inflammation.³ Even in that study, the receiver operating characteristic curve for serum ferritin, on its own, was diagnostically superior to the one generated by transferrin saturation.³

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- O'Connor NTJ, Hoffbrand AV. Anaemia of chronic disease. In: Delamore IW, Liu Yin JA, eds. *Haematological aspects of systemic disease*. London: Bailliere Tindall, 1990:52-7.
- Witte DL, Kraemer DF, Johnson GF, *et al.* Prediction of bone marrow iron findings from tests performed on peripheral blood. *Am J Clin Pathol* 1986;85:202-6.
- Punnonen K, Irjala K, Rajamaki A. Serum transferrin receptor and its ratio to serum ferritin in the diagnosis of iron deficiency. *Blood* 1997;89:1052-7.

NOTES

Falk Symposium No 123: VI International Symposium on Inflammatory Bowel Diseases

This Falk Symposium will be held on 3-5 September 2001 in Istanbul, Turkey. Further information: Falk Foundation e.V. - Congress Division, Leinenweberstr. 5, PO Box 6529, D-79041 Freiburg, Germany. Tel: +49 761 15 14 0; fax: +49 761 15 14 359; email: symposia@falkfoundation.de

Falk Symposium No 124: Medical Imaging in Gastroenterology and Hepatology

This Falk Symposium will be held on 28-29 September 2001 in Hannover, Germany. Further information: see Falk Symposium No 123 above.

9th Asian Conference on Diarrheal Diseases and Nutrition

This meeting will be held on 28-30 September 2001 in New Delhi, India. The organisers hope the meeting will promote meaningful and effective collaboration among individuals/institutions towards control of the major health problems in Asia, particularly those affecting women and children. Further information: Professor M K Bhan, Coordinator, Centre for Diarrheal Disease and Nutrition Research, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. Tel: +91 11 6963822; fax: +91 11 6862662; email: ascodd2001@rediffmail.com

VI Congress of the International Xenotransplantation Association

This congress will be held on 29 September to 3 October 2001 in Chicago, USA. Further information: Felicissimo & Associates Inc., 205 Viger Avenue West, Suite 201, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Z 1G2. Tel: +1 514 874 1998; fax: +1 514 874 1580; email: info@ixa2001chicago.com; website: www.ixax2001chicago.com

Falk Symposium No 125: Cytokines in Liver Injury and Repair

This Falk Symposium will be held on 30 September to 1 October 2001 in Hannover, Germany. Further information: see Falk Symposium No 123 above.

Falk Symposium No 126: Hepatocyte Transplantation

This Falk Symposium will be held on 2-3 October 2001 in Hannover, Germany. Further information: see Falk Symposium No 123 above.

EASL Single Topic Conference

The EASL Single Topic Conference "Liver fibrosis: from basic science to clinical targets" will be held on 12-13 October 2001 in Florence, Italy. Organisers: Massimo Pinzani (University of Florence) and Detlef Schuppan (University of Erlangen-Nuernberg). The aim of the conference is to provide the latest information on this key area of hepatology and to translate the current knowledge into clinical terms. It is directed at both the expert in the field and the general hepatologist. Further information: Massimo Pinzani, Dipartimento di Medicina Interna, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Viale GB Morgagni, 85, I-50134 Firenze, Italy. Tel: +39 055 4277845; fax: +44 39 055 417123; email: m.pinzani@dfc.unifi.it

Lecture Course in Coloproctology

This course will be held on 15-17 October 2001 in Harrow, UK. Professor Russell Stitz from Australia will be the Sir Alan Parks Visiting Professor and, for the first time, there will be a Sir Francis Avery Jones Visiting Professor, which will be Professor Paul Rutgeerts from Belgium. Further information: The Administrator, St Mark's Academic Institute,

St Mark's Hospital, Northwick Park, Harrow, Middx, HA1 3UJ, UK. Tel: +44 (0)20 8235 4046/8; fax: +44 (0)20 8235 4039; email: stmarks@ic.ac.uk; website: www.stmarkshospital.org.uk

International Symposium on Hyperammonemia, Liver Failure and Hepatic Encephalopathy

This symposium will be held on 20-22 October 2001 in Valencia, Spain. Further information: Càtedra Santiago Grisolia, Fundación Museu de les Ciències Príncipe Felipe, Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències, Avda. Instituto Obrero, s/n, 46013 Valencia, Spain. Tel: +34 96 197 44 66; fax: +34 96 197 44 70; email: catedrasg@cac.es. **Deadline for receipt of abstracts is 15 July 2001.**

ICGH-2: The Second Iranian Congress of Gastroenterology and Hepatology

The main Iranian meeting of gastroenterologists and researchers in this field will be held on 27 October to 1 November 2001 in Tehran, Iran. Further information: Dr Shahin Merat, Digestive Diseases Research Center, Shariati Hospital, N. Kargar Street, Tehran 14114, Iran. Tel: +98 911 717 3966; fax: +98 21 225 3635; email: merat@ams.ac.ir; website: www.ams.ac.ir/icgh. **Deadline for submission of abstracts is 31 May 2001.**

Falk Symposium No 127: Autoimmune Diseases in Pediatric Gastroenterology

This Falk Symposium will be held on 8-9 November 2001 in Basel, Switzerland. Further information: see Falk Symposium No 123 above.

42nd Annual Conference of the Indian Society of Gastroenterology

This conference will be held on 23-29 November 2001 in Lucknow, India. The programme includes two pre-conference symposia (on gastrointestinal motility and scientific communication, on 23 November), a one day postgraduate course or CME (24 November), and an endoscopy workshop (28-29 November). Further information: Dr S R Naik, Department of Gastroenterology, SGPGI, Lucknow 226014, India. Tel: +91 522 440700 or 440800, ext 2400; fax: +91 522 440078 or 440017; website: www.sgpgi.ac.in/conf/isg2001.html

41st St Andrew's Day Festival Symposium on Therapeutics

This will be held on 6-7 December 2001 in Edinburgh, UK. Further information: Ms Eileen Strawn, Syposium Co-ordinator. Tel: +44 (0)131 225 7324; fax: +44 (0)131 220 4393; email: e.strawn@rcpe.ac.uk; website: www.rcpe.ac.uk

14th Intensive European Course of Digestive Endoscopy

This course will be held on 17-18 December 2001 in Strasbourg, France. Further information: Michele Centonze Conseil, 6 bis rue des Cendriers, 75020 Paris, France. Tel: +33 1 44 62 68 80; fax: +33 1 43 49 68 58; email: mail@m-centonze-conseil.com