BOOK REVIEW

Hepatitis C and B. Management and Treatment
Thierry Poynard, Taylor and Francis, London,
1-84184-369-5 (£55)

The literature on viral hepatitis is vast, with many
thousands of original papers published on all aspects
of hepatitis A, B, C, D and E. There are also several
well-established and comprehensive textbooks on
viral hepatitis, a series of reviews and substantial
volumes on viral hepatitis and liver disease following
the tri-annual International Symposium on viral
hepatitis held since 1972.

This mountain of information on a major public
health problem and important and common acute
and chronic liver diseases in all countries of the
world would be impossible to digest by the clinician.
Hepatologists, too, are often bewildered by the
speed of progress in understanding the epidemiol-
ogy, virology, pathogenesis, treatment and preven-
tion of all forms of viral hepatitis.

This small volume on the Management and Treat-
ment of Hepatitis C and B by Professor Thierry
Poynard from Paris is, therefore, a welcome addi-
tion to the literature in that it provides a simplified
and easily digestible guide to the treatment of the
chronic sequelae of these two common virus infec-
tions. The book also has the added advantage that it
is not a multi-authored volume, so the views of an
expert clinician are presented in a readable, non-
controversial and brief format and, more impor-
tantly, it also summarises the consensus of clinical
opinion in many countries.

The book is well illustrated with simple line dia-
agrams and tables, some of which contain unfortu-
nate errors such as transaminitie for transaminitis,
fibroser for fibrosis, Australian antigen for Australia
antigen and others. The natural history of hepatitis
B and C receives the briefest of descriptions, the
nature of these viruses is omitted, hepatitis B vac-
cines are hardly mentioned (although extensive
immunisation programmes have been undertaken
in France with some controversy and attempts at
immunotherapy without and with antiviral drugs
were initiated in France and are in progress there
and elsewhere). References to the literature are
perhaps too selective and are often limited to a few
well-read, essentially clinical journals. One further
minor criticism is the small print used.

This is a welcome, good and comprehensive guide
to the management and treatment of chronic hepa-
titis B and C, which are likely to change with the
rapid advances in the development of effective
antiviral drugs. This book is recommended to clin-
icians treating patients with chronic liver disease.

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