BOOK REVIEWS

John M. Porter, MD, Book Review Section Editor

Vascular pathology

This is an encyclopedic work compiled by two pathologists; W. E. Stehbens, Professor Emeritus of Pathology, New Zealand School of Medicine and Malaghan Institute of Pathology, Wellington, New Zealand, and J. T. Lie, Department of Pathology, University of California, Davis, California. This volume, written in collaboration with 23 pathologists from around the world, attempts to fill a gap that previously existed in the libraries of physicians managing vascular disease.

In a systematic and complete fashion, the text covers pathology, hemodynamics, congenital anomalies, biochemical and metabolic disorders, atherosclerosis, and other vascular diseases. The information in this 785-page book is presented concisely and in an easily accessible manner. The photographs and illustrations are used appropriately and contribute to the explanation of the text. The list of references for each chapter is complete, and current vascular literature is cited.

Some of the chapters in this book should be required reading, especially “Connective tissue components of the blood vessel wall in health and disease” by S. Robins and C. Farquharson, and “Biochemistry and cell biology of atherogenesis” by H. F. Hoff. Other chapters that are likely to be valuable are “Neoplasms of the large blood vessels and tumor angiogenesis” and “Tumors and tumefactions of the peripheral blood vessels.”

As can be expected in the first volume of an ambitious project, there are some deficiencies. A chapter on the embryology of the cardiovascular system leading to a discussion of congenital defects in the vascular tree would have been welcome. There is only one paragraph on the pathology of radiation arteritis, and it is misplaced in the index. I am sure the editors will take note of these deficiencies and omissions in the next volume.

This book is a timely contribution to the vascular disease knowledge base and will quickly become a definitive reference text. I highly recommend it to anyone who is seeking a compendium of data and references on vascular pathology for his or her shelves.

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Cardiovascular pharmacology and therapeutics

Cardiovascular Pharmacology and Therapeutics was created to meet the need for a specialized text of drugs used in the treatment of cardiovascular disease. This need has resulted from the rapid development of new drugs and the need for redefining established regimens of therapeutic intervention in the setting of the changing health care environment. As the editors intend, the book provides a rationale for the use of cardiovascular drugs on the basis of results of basic research and clinical trials. The editors brought together an international group of basic scientists, clinicians, and clinical investigators expert in therapeutic intervention for cardiovascular disease. The text is well written, the illustrations are informative, the references are current, and subject index is extensive. There are three major conceptual sections of the text, each of which contains separate subtopics and chapters. The first section is an excellent review of basic pharmacologic principles. These early chapters provide the necessary introduction to clinical and research aspects of pharmacology including pharmacokinetics. A chapter devoted to basic concepts of gene therapy is a topic not usually found in textbooks of pharmacology. This chapter provides an easy-to-follow summary of current techniques as they apply to cardiovascular physiology. Another unique chapter discusses design and statistical evaluation of clinical trials. This chapter should be useful to clinical residents and internists interested in initiating clinical studies.

The second major section of the book reviews 20 classes of drugs currently used in therapeutic management of cardiovascular disease. The chapters, in general, are short, comprehensive, and up-to-date. These chapters serve as a strong support and reference for later chapters dealing with cardiovascular diseases. A reasonable effort was made to introduce new drugs and therapeutic strategies, including one short chapter devoted to novel biochemicals such as growth factors and adhesion molecules.

The third major section of the book is organized according to major cardiovascular disorders including myocardial ischemia, infections and arrhythmias, congestive heart failure, hypertension, antithrombotic therapy, dyslipidemias and atherosclerosis; and heart transplantation. Some overlap with previous chapters is encountered in the evaluation of therapeutic intervention. However, because it is unlikely that the book would be read in direct sequence, the overlap is acceptable. For example, these sections could be used for assigned readings for discussion, review and teaching of medical and graduate students, and resident training. Throughout these sections, some consideration is given to evaluate clinical data as they relate to reduction in mortality rates.

In addition to the chapters devoted to design of clinical trials and gene therapy, another unique feature of the text is chapters dealing with specialized cardiovascular therapies for pediatric, geriatric, and pregnant patients. Other demographic considerations of sex and race are also considered.