Book Reviews

Nitric Oxide and the Cardiovascular System
J. Loscalzo, J. A. Vita, Eds.

The recent discovery of nitric oxide in the cardiovascular system led to the award of the 1998 Nobel Prize in Medicine. The biology of nitric oxide and its clinical importance are rapidly evolving as more and more research papers are reported from different centres. This book provides an extremely useful update of the current status of nitric oxide and its many roles in a variety of cell and organ systems. The editors from Boston University Medical Center have collated the experience of 47 authors. Although the majority are from U.S.A., there are six European authors from Belgium, Germany and U.K.

The book is divided into three parts and 30 chapters. Part I (Biology of NO) consists of 12 chapters. Cellular Signal Transduction and NO contains important information for the vascular surgeons related to endothelial cells, platelets and smooth muscle cells. Cytotoxicity, Apoptosis, Vasomotor regulation, Platelet-mediated haemostasis and Leucocyte–endothelial Adhesion are very important for vascular surgeons who require a more complete understanding of vascular function and the fundamental role of NO. Part II (Cardiovascular Pathophysiology) consists of nine chapters. Endothelial dysfunction, atherosclerosis, stroke and ischaemia–reperfusion are presented and discussed in a variety of chapters. These related chapters make quite an easy read for vascular surgeons. Part III (NO in Cardiovascular Therapeutics) consists of nine chapters. An understanding of graft and endovascular devices, stenosis and thrombosis has become essential for vascular surgeons involved in the management of patients with vascular disease. For instance, Diazeniumdiolat and L-arginine appear to exert a beneficial effect on venous graft stenosis. On the other hand, local coating of thrombogenic surfaces with NO-donating compounds will become an interesting research area in the near future. Given the recent rapid progress in technology development and gene transfer, the use of NO gene therapy will bring new horizons to the treatment of vascular disease.

My review has focused on vascular disease and NO. However, this book would be very useful for the cardiologist, transplant surgeon, genetic engineer and related scientists. Overall, the book seems excellent. The tables and figures are of excellent quality, and the references are up to date and accessible. Its price is reasonable and I recommend it to anyone who is interested in understanding more about the underlying pathophysiology of the cardiovascular system.

M. Bayazıt
Ankara, Turkey

Color Atlas of Vascular Diseases
C. Diehm, I. R. Allenberg, K. Nimura-Eckert, F. J. Veith

This is a relatively original and innovative cooperative atlas. The major aim of the authors was to focus on visual material relevant to the most important vascular diseases. Therefore the concept of the book was to provide as many pictures, angiograms, illustrations as possible, and a minimum of basic text consisting of legends and short presentation of essentials.

The book is divided into four parts: arterial system, venous system, lymphatic system and vascular malformations. Part I comprises nine chapters: arterial diseases in general, cerebro-encephalic disease, upper extremity, thoracic and abdominal aorta, visceral arteries, arteries of the leg, diabetic foot, Buerger’s disease, functional disorders and vasculitides.

The first chapter deals with essentials concerning
morphology of the arterial wall, pathology of atherosclerosis, plaque constitution with basic coloured figures and some nice macroscopic or angioscopic views of various types of atheromatous lesions.

The following chapters (2–9) are presented the same way. At the beginning of each chapter basic sciences concerning the topic are summarised and some helpful details concerning history are presented. For example, in the chapter on cerebro-vascular disease some details on the pathological events that involved some well known politicians like Roosevelt, Stalin, Lenin and Churchill are given, illustrated by historical pictures.

Each basic chapter is completed by an important series of illustrations devoted to clinical or non-invasive testing. This complete representation of the current clinical practice gives an important value in training the clinical eye and essential help in the analysis of clinical data.

The presentation of some complete clinical cases from the clinical situation through examination and investigation and finally to the operative (surgical or endovascular) procedure gives trainees an excellent preparation for some practical examinations such as the EBSQ-VASC.

The part devoted to venous disease seems very important, since all the different aspects of venous pathology are presented, explained and documented. Not only very basic pictures on varicose veins are shown, but also views on endoscopic subfacial surgery of performing veins or unsatisfactory scarving following stripping. The sections on lymphatic and congenital malformations bring no more than the essentials plus a lot of pictures on the various types of disorders that authors have collected from their own experience.

This book can be considered as a mine of pictorial documentation on every kind of vascular disease which will help everybody in the vascular community. Unfortunately I must point out some minor errors:

- Some figures have legends both in English and in German (fig. 9-4, p. 218).
- Some figures have been used twice: fig. 4-123 is also presented but just inverted in fig. 6-28 and 6-29, p. 143.
- Some legends are misplaced or wrong. The legend for fig. 4-126 is: “an axillary–bifemoral bypass was performed as shown in the angiographic image”, but the angio is missing.
- Pages 47 and 60: the legends of figs 2-79 and 3-24 are not correct.

These are some minor mistakes that can easily be corrected by the reader, but they raise questions about the quality of the editing. Finally the major point that has to be discussed is the use of these illustrations. Most of us, preparing oral presentations for teaching or meetings, are interested in reproducing such illustrations. It would have been useful and completely innovative to provide, in association with the book, a set of slides or even a CD with the copyright cost of reproduction included in the price.

J. G. Kretz
France


ABC of Arterial and Venous Disease

This recent title in the well known ABC series from BMJ Books is a compilation of the series of articles published between March and June 2000 in the British Medical Journal.

The booklet contains fourteen compact chapters, each of them only three to five pages long. These short chapters cover common epidemiological, aetiological, pathophysiological, clinical, diagnostic and therapeutic aspects of arterial and venous diseases, as well as relevant secondary preventive measures. The following topics are described in separate chapters: non-invasive methods of arterial and venous assessment, acute limb ischaemia, chronic limb ischaemia, acute stroke, secondary prevention of peripheral vascular disease, secondary prevention of transient ischaemic attack and stroke, vascular complications of diabetes, renal artery stenosis, arterial aneurysms, vasculitis, varicose veins, the swollen limb, (one chapter dealing with deep vein thrombosis and another chapter about lymphoedema) and the ulcerated lower limb. The authorship comprises a large number of contributors from the U.K and Ireland, representing the various disciplines which these days are involved in vascular medicine, including specialists in internal medicine, vascular surgeons, general practitioners, radiologists, an ophthalmologist and a dermatologist. In this way the book is a good example of the multidisciplinary and integrated care for the patient with a vascular disease which is increasingly the standard in modern medical practice. Comparison of the contents and the coverage of the topics of this book with the previous BMJ Book on vascular diseases published in 1992