

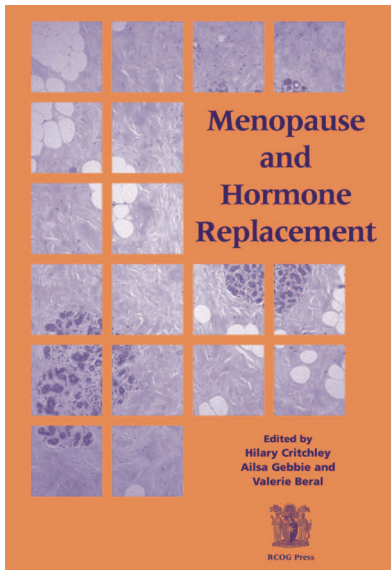
## BOOK REVIEWS

### Menopause and Hormone Replacement

Edited by Hilary Critchley, Ailsa Gebbie and Valerie Beral  
RCOG Press 2004  
Price £48.00. Pp 364  
ISBN 190475211X

Menopause and Hormone Replacement deals with this very topical subject with an in-depth coverage of the background physiology and epidemiological aspects of this so-called 'third-age' of woman and its management.

This book is a product of work by pre-eminent experts in their various related fields who formed the 47th Study Group of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecology, and it shows. The analysis of hormone replacement is broad, exhaustive and incisive. The various hormone replacement therapy (HRT) preparations, their pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics and the known physiological effects up to the cellular level are discussed with impressive detail and clarity. The many 'unknowns' with hormone replacement are also quite well covered in the



discussion chapters with many hypotheses and theories discussed. Issues of observed as opposed to expected effects of estrogen replacement especially on the cardiovascular system are also covered. There is excellent coverage of the effect of HRT on cancer, breast, brain and the skeletal system. With ongoing uncertainty about the safety of standard HRT, non-hormonal alternatives are also covered.

This book's slight weakness is on the subject of premature menopause and its management. While this is touched on, it is not nearly to the same depth as the other areas and many pertinent questions remain unanswered. There is also scant mention of newer products such as strontium ranelate for treating osteoporosis. These do not, however, take

away from the fact that this is an exceptionally good book for clinicians at all levels, and one will be hard pushed to find a finer and more authoritative body of work on the subject today.

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### Developmental Vascular Biology

Edited by Gerald P. Schatten  
Academic Press  
Price £35.00. Pp260  
ISBN 0121531627

The endothelium – its' subtle importance is often underrated in our minds, yet it is of profound significance as the arbiter of so much cardiac and vascular disease. It plays a critical role in the mechanics of blood flow, the regulation of coagulation, leucocyte adhesion, and vascular smooth muscle cell growth. For years the endothelium was thought of as an inert single layer of cells passively allowing the passage of water and other small molecules across the vessel wall. However, this dynamic tissue performs many other active functions and this new text explores the relevant issues.

Cleverly, the focus is on how the intricacies of basic research findings in vascular and endothelial cell biology translate to clinical practice. The endothelium is presented as both the source and target of novel therapeutic concepts. This means that diseases such as atherosclerosis, hypertension, arterial stenosis, diabetes and inflam-

matory and immune processes that involve the vascular wall can be treated by drawing from the endothelium and modifying it.

From the developmental biology angle, contemporary topics, such as stimulating angiogenesis, cloning and stem cells, as well as the traditional areas of cellular and molecular development of the vascular endothelium are all explored and explained.

Coverage includes up-to-date research on lipoproteins, leucocytes, prostacyclin and thromboxane, the role of the endothelium in gene therapy and the patho-biology of plaque rupture. This book is very interesting and relevant for both researchers and clinicians because it highlights how the understanding of low-level pathophysiology and vascular biology can make a huge difference in the clinical setting.

*Dr Paul Grant  
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**The Year in Urology Volume 2**  
P Abrams, JL Probert, H Schwaibold  
Clinical Publishing

Price £59.99  
ISBN: 190439230X

This is a very informative and update text, covering every aspect of urology. It is aimed at practicing urologists, trainees and clinicians with a urological interest.

Following on from the successful 2003 edition of The Year in Urology, the 2nd edition looks at the most recent literature on urological health care, areas that are constantly developing, with research taking place at a great rate. Organized into four principal sections it encompasses all the new developments in this rapidly developing speciality.

Some of the authors have already contributed to the previous version and some are new to the team. All well-known specialists in their fields and are able to summarize eloquently the pertinent points of the papers reviewed, thus giving the reader a comprehensive overview of the most important information in this rapidly developing field.

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