

## Cardiovascular Disease in the Octogenarian and Beyond

Edited by Nanette K Wenger  
Martin Dunitz Ltd 1998  
Price £75.00. Pp 456  
ISBN 1 85317 581 1

In this book, Wenger reviews the background and general principles of the diagnosis and management of cardiovascular disease in the very elderly.

The book is divided into five sections. The first focuses on the prevalence of cardiovascular disease in older age and changes in cardiovascular function with ageing. In section II, current management of heart failure and syncope are discussed. Section III addresses cardiovascular assessment of the older patient undergoing non-cardiac surgery. In Section IV, the physiology of ageing and ageing effects on drug pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics are reviewed, and section V deals with specific cardiovascular diseases.

The authors review the diagnosis and management of specific cardiovascular diseases in the octogenarian and beyond. They emphasize that there are few studies of evaluation of and therapies for cardiovascular disease in older patients, highlighting relevant gaps in our knowledge. The final three chapters deal with end-of-life decisions and cost-effective care of the older patient with cardiovascular disease. They focus largely on the American health-care system, but the issues are relevant to all health-care systems focusing on providing comprehensive and cost-effective care.

At £75.00 this textbook may be considered expensive and I would have liked more tables, figures and illustrations. In a single volume, the authors address important issues to guide appropriate, cost-effective clinical cardiovascular care for the elderly and provides valuable information for those caring for the older patient with cardiovascular disease. However, like all textbooks of this nature, it will need regular updating to keep pace with emerging clinical and scientific advances.

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## The Pancreas

Edited by Hans G Beger, Andrew L Warshaw, Markus W Buchler, David L Carr-Locke, John P Noptolemo, Christopher Russell, Michael G Sarr  
Blackwell Science 1998  
Price £295.00. Pp 1215  
ISBN 0 865 42420 9

This two-volume text is impressive. It would appear that the editors — six of whom are surgeons — have met, produced an exhaustive list of all conceivable aspects of pancreatic surgery and then decided to write individual chapters on each. They have then identified a wide ranging group of international pancreatic experts — not just surgeons — and persuaded them to contribute. Finally Blackwell Science have put this together in two volumes of high class text, diagrams and computed tomography images and the end result is a classic textbook which will surely succeed.

How does one assess the value of such a book? Pancreatic practice for most surgeons involves the care of patients with pancreatitis or pancreatic carcinoma. These are unfortunately common disorders and most cases are uncomplicated and do not present serious management problems.

Nevertheless in pancreatic surgery difficulties of diagnosis and decision occur regularly and this is where this book is likely to be of great help. Detailed descriptions of almost all possible scenarios means that this book will prove its reference value for even the experienced surgeon. If the usefulness of a book is tested by its capacity to help in the management of personal recent difficult cases, this text is a real confidence booster.

It is not a book for the trainee who is beginning to develop an interest in the pancreas. It will be used as reference but there is too much detail for it to be useful as an overview of pancreatic disease. There are better texts available for this. While the management of patients with complex pancreatic disease is now increasingly being handed over to specialist units, most cases of pancreatic disease are initially looked after outside these institutions. The beauty of this book is that even if one needs to refer the patient on, usually because of the lack of facilities, it is probable that one will do so in the knowledge that having used the book, the tertiary referral centre will simply follow one's advice!

I suggest you buy it, or on second thoughts, at £295 it should be on open access in the library.

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## Allergy Principles and Practice (5th edn)

Edited by Elliott Middleton Jr, Charles E Reed, Elliot F Ellis, N Franklin Adkinson Jr, John W Yunginger, William W Busse  
Mosby 1998  
Pp 2000 + Price £185.00  
ISBN 0 815 10072 8

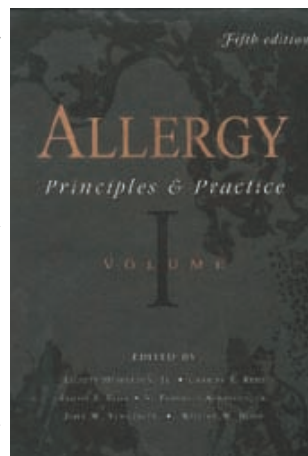
It was a real pleasure to be asked to review this, the fifth edition of what is reputed to be the leader in its field. Since 1978, when the first edition was published, the editors have intended the book to be a comprehensive reference text covering the basic science aspects of allergic disease as well as a practical source for help with allergy diagnosis and management. With its 150 contributors, one third of which are new to this edition, coming from the USA, Canada and Europe, it is not simply another American textbook.

The astonishing explosion of new information relevant to allergy and immunology has resulted in the addition of 18 new chapters dealing with such things as genetics, adhesion molecules, cytokines, chemokines, endothelial and epithelial cell biology, HIV immunology, anti-leukotriene drugs in asthma, asthma guidelines and their outcomes, upper airway endoscopy and latex allergy. There are several useful appendixes of human chemokines, adhesion molecules, leukocyte cell surface proteins and inside the

covers of both volumes there is a chart of cytokines in allergic diseases. The authors have even provided website addresses where new and updated information can be located.

As a rhinologist I thought the chapters on allergic and non-allergic rhinitis, upper airway endoscopy, nasal polyps and sinusitis were clear and readable with some useful check lists and flow diagrams. There are 24 coloured plates in volume 1 which illustrate the changes in the asthmatic airway and sputum and include some nasendoscopic pictures. However, I think the authors could have chosen better pictures than the left sphenoidal recess and the right middle meatus after surgical placement of a superior antral window.

A picture of the normal nose, nasal polyps or the nose in straightforward allergic rhinitis compared to that seen in a systemic disorder such as Wegener's would have perhaps been more helpful. Volume 1 also has some good schematic colour plates which explain neutrophil interaction with the epithelium simply and eloquently.



There are some very useful chapters for clinicians, especially that on the approach to patients with recurrent infections. The spectrum of mast cell disorders, previously quite confusing, is clearly explained in another chapter. The final chapter involves a review of unconventional theories and unproved methods in allergy.

The number of illustrations and tables is vastly increased in this textbook compared to many others and it is hard to find a page which would not be pleasing to Alice in Wonderland.

The references after each chapter are grouped into different areas so it is easy to find those which are needed. I have no hesitation in recommending this as the major reference source for all allergists/ immunologists. It would also be very helpful to clinicians working on the skin and airways. When not actively involved in reading it the 2 volumes make an excellent set of weights for a quick workout!

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