

Immune haemolytic anaemias

Lawrence D. Petz and George Garratty, Churchill Livingstone, Philadelphia Publication, 2004. ISBN 0-443-08559-5. 591 pp.

Now that Sir John Dacie's 'Autoimmune Haemolytic Anaemias' is 12 years old, this book, a second edition of the authors' earlier 'Acquired Hemolytic Anemias', will stand as a strong contender for the title of Bible in its field. It is a most welcome edition and will rapidly find its place in most diagnostic haematology laboratories as well as on the shelves of clinically active haematologists.

In addition to the wealth of clinical and laboratory details, I particularly enjoyed the chapter on historical concepts – it gives us a real sense of perspective – and the fact that the book is not limited to autoimmune disease. Haemolytic disease of the newborn features prominently in both the historical sections and, albeit not exhaustively (for there are other sources which dissect out in detail various approaches to assessing severity of disease and to treatment), in the main body of the book.

I like the organisation of the chapters and their content because they so often follow a clinically relevant problem-solving format, which allows both laboratory and clinical haematologists to pursue in detail their own, but overlapping, interests as well as the luxury of delving more deeply into clinical or laboratory aspects, as required. I suspect that the authors' solution to the problem of providing a solid

background of understanding of both laboratory and clinical aspects of these diseases will be readily familiar to British haematologists, who should be very comfortable with the notion, and may well be invaluable to readers in some other countries where clinical and laboratory practice are rather more separated. I welcomed the chapter on haemolysis associated with transplantation, a much bigger subject that it was even at the time of Dacie's last book, and was especially pleased to find a special section covering autoimmune haemolytic anaemias in children amongst other 'Unusual aspects of immune hemolytic anemias'.

Finally, it is almost always (and certainly is, in this case) a pleasure to read a book in which literary style is individual (or, as in this case, twin) as opposed to the sometimes uncomfortably clashing styles of chapters in many multi-author textbooks. You can hear the authors' personal experience coming through loud and clear. I find I use this book in three ways already: as a reference book, for reading in depth and to browse through purely for pleasure.

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