

BOOK REVIEW

Immune Hemolytic Anemias. Petz LD, Garratty G. ed. 2. Churchill Livingstone, Philadelphia, 2004.

It was a pleasure indeed to review the new edition of *Acquired Immune Hemolytic Anemias*. My second copy of the original edition (the first having been “borrowed” by a hematology trainee who clearly recognized value) is well worn, foxed, thumbed, and side-noted from frequent use. It was therefore a most welcome event to receive the second edition of this magnum opus. It has been long awaited, appearing 24 years after the initial publication. It proves to be well worth the wait.

As the authors indicate, while cases with immune hemolytic anemias are sufficiently common as to be an important clinical problem, these are sufficiently uncommon that it is difficult for many individuals outside referral centers to develop sufficient expertise to feel at ease in managing the diverse problems such cases may present. A considerable aid in this is now available in the second edition of *Immune Hemolytic Anemias*. Petz (emeritus professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, University of California, LA) and Garratty (scientific director of the American Red Cross Blood Services, Southern California Region, and clinical professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, University of California, LA) have combined their considerable collective knowledge to offer an authoritative source of information for all who care for patients with immune hemolytic anemia, including clinicians with patient care responsibility and blood bank professionals.

Like a well-organized graduate seminar, each book chapter is its own multifaceted nugget and each nugget leads to the next. The authors supply detailed scientific background on both clinical and laboratory aspects of immune hemolytic anemias, and the text has been expanded to include new chapters covering the full spectrum of immune hemolytic anemia. New chapters review historic concepts of immune hemolytic anemias, hemolytic disease of the fetus and newborn, immune hemolysis associated with transplantation, and hemolytic transfusion reactions. The absorbing, extensively illustrated new chapter on the history alone would justify acquisition of this edition, but the book elaborates on the diagnosis, treatment, and manage-

ment of the various types of immune hemolytic anemia with the information harvested from the authors' own extensive experience over many years, together with an extensively referenced literature review of important papers. It has been revised and updated from beginning to end and presents authoritative coverage of all of today's best laboratory tests as well as the latest diagnostic and treatment methods. The book covers such topics as the classification and clinical characteristics of autoimmune hemolytic anemia, serological investigation, specificities of autoantibodies, the difficult issues of blood transfusion in these disorders, and more. The intent of this book is, in part, to present the rationale of clinical methods to those readers who may well understand laboratory research methods but are less able to undertake a critical analysis of clinical research reports and vice versa. It succeeds in this. The authors also appear to be aware that blood bankers sometimes lack training in this area, and there are chapters on basic concepts of immunology and hematology. One of the strengths of this book is that the 2 authors provide a uniformity of expression and thought. Each chapter reviews issues logically and notes what studies have been done and what should be done to provide a scientifically based decision.

What sets this book apart is its readability and yet comprehensiveness. Its 12 chapters (591 pages) provide an introduction to the basics for the novice but is also an invaluable reference for the expert. Overall, this is a remarkably coherent overview and there are a few criticisms. This reviewer might have preferred to have had all the very useful detailed test methods as an appendix. There are occasional inconsistencies (such as the mislabeling of Figure 4-11—the legend refers to a different figure (4-1) in the previous edition rather than the new figure shown), but these are minor. Because of the extensive details, some may find this a “slow read” and those uninitiated to a particular topic may have to read and reread the book to grasp all the significance of the information provided. Nonetheless, the book is well organized into chapters,

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which define basic concepts, laboratory findings, and their interpretation and then discuss practical issues. It is, throughout, illustrated by examples, tables, and figures. Each chapter stands nicely on its own. Because of this, there are small redundancies and repetitions in various chapters; however, the authors are good at cross-linking those areas from chapter to chapter and there is a logical progression as one proceeds through the book. Many of the difficult concepts and key points are summarized. The book is good at separating known facts, research in progress, and identifying controversies.

This is a relatively easy book to read because of its mechanistic approach. The text is well written and easy to follow with a logical flow throughout. It is well endowed with clinical cases integrating both clinical and laboratory medicine. The reference list is comprehensive and will be an important resource for investigators and treaters of the disorders. It continues the advantage of the previous edition by offering an enormous body of information under one cover and I expect to find that, as before, when I think that I have discovered a new clinical or laboratory aspect of immune hemolytic anemia, it has already been described in this comprehensive resource.

This book makes the science, clinical associations, and laboratory management of the often-complex area of immune hemolysis accessible to a broad audience. This makes it an ideal text for those looking into launching a study or treatment of immune hemolytic disorders. The book belongs on the bookshelf of every clinician who assesses patients with red cell disorders. It should prove useful to students, clinician-researchers, clinicians with patient care responsibilities, and particularly to blood transfusion professionals, including physicians and technical staff, and indeed to anyone wishing to take the mystery out of the field. While primary care physicians, unless specifically dealing with anemia as a subspecialty, will most likely not use this material enough to warrant its inclusion in their library, this expanded

edition is highly recommended for all medical school libraries as a reference text. It is an essential addition to the library of any unit performing red cell investigations. Furthermore, the text is a natural candidate for use by instructors in the field of hematology and immunology, as Petz and Garratty have done a masterful job in delineating the different disorders in a logical, well-written, and thoughtful manner.

In summary, it is a pleasure to find a true compendium on immune hemolytic anemia that covers the entire range of current relevant knowledge in physiology, pathology, and clinical medicine. It is a detailed, up-to-date, highly referenced text for clinical scientists and physicians that includes recent developments in this rapidly expanding field. More than as a scientific resource, this is a practical authoritative reference and guide to the diagnosis and management of immune hemolytic anemias. The chapters follow a logical sequence, clarifying the magnitude of the problem and providing practical solutions. They include experimental research and clinical applications and combine the knowledge and expertise of 2 giants in the field. Chapters from the previous edition have been rewritten with new illustrations and tables. With the reorganization, updated information, and addition of recent advances in the field, the new second edition is better than ever. Its high standards are a testament to the coordinated work of dedicated authors. It is destined to become an important reference for members of the transfusion medicine community in dealing with daily ongoing investigation and management of patients with immune hemolytic anemia. The authors must be commended for their efforts to provide the hematological community with a textbook of this quality.

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