

Book review

Principles and Practice of Clinical Virology, 3rd Edn.

Edited by: A.J. Zuckerman, J.E. Banatrala and J.R. Pattison. John Wiley and Sons Publishers, 1994.

This is an excellent compendium of clinical virology covering 24 groups of viruses and prions. The 44 authors are predominantly from the UK. As pointed out by the editors, "Principles and Practice of Clinical Virology" was first published in 1987 and this third edition is published 7 years later, attesting to the continuing and rapid progress in the field. The chapters are greatly revised from the previous edition, and new material and chapters added. References are intentionally kept to a minimum citing only key references. When this is done one runs the risk of leaving out major articles and key investigators. This reviewer found this to be the case in several chapters.

The book is certainly thorough in its coverage of all the viruses. Although there is no uniformity in the chapters, other than excellence, they all cover the virus itself, pathogenesis, epidemiology, clinical features, diagnosis, clinical management and prevention. Vaccines are well covered, including the latest vaccine to be approved varicella-zoster (V-Z). Although, the chapter was written prior to the V-Z vaccine approval in the US, it is fairly treated in spite of the authors bias (shared by the reviewer) that prevention for the majority

of individuals can be regarded as unnecessary. The greatest need for this vaccine is in immunocompromised individuals, such as susceptible leukemics.

It was somewhat disappointing that the role of antiviral agents was downplayed, particularly since this is a book on clinical virology. Interferon was not given its due in the chapter on hepatitis; rimantadine, the drug of choice against influenza, received one sentence; ribavirin does get good treatment in the RSV chapter, probably because it was written by C.B. Hall who did much of the ribavirin work. Extensive positive studies with ribavirin against Hantaan virus hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome is treated with one sentence. Arenaviruses are treated somewhat better receiving a full paragraph. The role of interferon in treatment of papillomaviruses is treated fairly, although studies in genital warts are ignored. There is some discussion of antiviral agents against HIV, but since considerable work has been done in this area one would have hoped for more. Perhaps the best treatment of antivirals is in the herpesvirus chapter, particularly HSV and V-Z, somewhat less in CMV.

Although, this admittedly biased reviewer felt that antiviral agents were not well treated in this book, it is a thorough, useful, and well done book and a worthy contribution to the field.

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