


BOOKS RECEIVED

Medical Virology 10

This book outlines the proceedings of the 10th International Symposium on Medical Virology, held in October, 1990 at Newport Beach, California. The text consists of 12 extensive reviews, presumably given as invited lectures during plenary sessions of the meeting. These are followed by 21 single-page abstracts. Although the reviews stand as individual articles, it is possible to discern some linking themes between them. Thus, the first four chapters cover various aspects of laboratory diagnostic virology, including the usefulness and applications of electronmicroscopy, the use of the polymerase chain reaction in detecting viral nucleic acid sequences, and the Q replicase amplification technique. The final four chapters are concerned with aspects of prevention and treatment of virus infections, specifically those transmitted by transfusion, a novel approach to influenza vaccination by use of a purified neuraminidase subunit vaccine, lessons learned from use of an attenuated varicella vaccine, and the potential of antisense oligonucleotides as antiviral agents. The intervening third of the book is more of a mixed bag, covering determinants of measles mortality, the epidemiology of HIV-1 infection, human herpesvirus type 6, and papillomaviruses and human cancer. Perhaps a unique feature, for a book of this nature, is the absence of a chapter on hepatitis C virus, or, indeed, any of the hepatitis viruses. Paradoxically, this avoidance of such a high profile area of clinical virology may be seen as a strength, as it allows attention to be devoted to some of the "less glamorous" topics in clinical virology.

The reviews are authoritatively written and up-to-date, with several references from 1990. Individual preferences will no doubt vary, but for this reader the chapters on HHV6, and the influenza and varicella vaccines were of most interest. Each review is followed by a question-and-answer style discussion, written in the vernacular, of perhaps limited usefulness. Similarly, the abstracts at the end of the book, mostly concerned with comparisons of diagnostic techniques, will not be of general interest. Given the need to publish these reviews with sufficient speed to ensure that the information is still relevant, one can forgive the rather large number of typographical errors. Despite these limitations, overall there is much here to hold the attention of any medical virologist, or physician with an interest in virus infections, although at the price indicated, I suspect that most copies will be purchased for library collections rather than individual use.

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