

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Dermatological Phototherapy and Photodiagnostic Methods*, ed. by J. Krutmann, H. Hönigsmann, C. A. Elmetts and P. R. Bergstresser. 2001. ISBN 3-540-67789-5. Price £61.50. Springer-Verlag, New York. Hardcover. 412 pages. 104 figures and 70 tables.

The 38 authors of this book comprise a group of European and American experts working in the fields of photobiology and photodermatology. The book is a mix of basic facts on UV radiation, dosimetry and technical equipment, and of practical clinical advice regarding photo(chemo)therapy of different dermatoses, including less common indications for its use. Recent treatment modalities such as photodynamic therapy, extracorporeal photoimmunotherapy and UVA-1 phototherapy are also covered. In the Appendix, practical guidelines for broadband UVB, narrowband UVB, UVA-1 phototherapy and PUVA photochemotherapy are given. One chapter is a good overview of acute and chronic photodamage and photoprotection. Different photodiagnostic procedures are described, and well-arranged test protocols for each of the different photodermatoses and for photopatch testing are included. There is also a very useful list on technical equipment and companies or providers in the Appendix. Pictures and figures are generally of good quality. Some of the tables have been squeezed together, however, and therefore difficult to read. A less conventional layout of the book would have made it still more tempting to read.

The well-balanced mix of basic data and clinically relevant advice has made this book attractive for all dermatologists, and it is highly recommended.

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*Laser Hair Removal*, by David J. Goldberg. 2000. ISBN 1-85317-831-4. Price £49.95. Martin Dunitz. Hardcover. 224 pages. 242 figs.

The book has obviously been written with the intention of functioning as a guide for practising physicians who wish to begin working in laser hair removal. There are 10 chapters, 5 of which deal with different laser systems and their applications. The last chapter covers 17 pages and gives a description of how to market a hair removal practice, clearly illustrating the commercial part of hair removal.

A coloured square at the start of each chapter lists key points that are sometimes a bit too theoretical and lack the practical approach a beginner will need. The introductory chapter, which deals with hair biology,

could have been longer and more comprehensive; one example is the part dealing with hormonal effects on hair. In the main, the text is probably too difficult for someone who is not an experienced dermatologist (by training).

The section on laser physics is very readable and several crucial aspects, such as the importance of the spot size, are pointed out. Unfortunately, this is not developed enough in the following chapters, which deal with the different laser systems. I would have preferred to see an instruction on what to think of when buying a laser rather than an enumeration of the specifications of the machines.

The part reviewing previous studies and results is in my opinion too extensive and thorough, and the lack of important definitions of words such as regrowth, permanent hair loss, temporary hair loss and prolonged hair loss causes confusion. In several places the author states that shaving promotes the transmission of laser energy down the hair follicle. This is a concept which is difficult to understand.

I would have liked to see a longer paragraph dealing with side effects and much more definitive advice on how to avoid and above all treat them. Some of the pictures are said to describe how the side effects look right after treatment, but they rather show the treated area a day or two later. There are many illustrations, but was it really necessary to include the blurred ones?

The chapter on electrolysis for permanent hair removal, by Robert N. Richards, is excellent, straightforward and should be read carefully by all those who want to go in for laser hair removal. By and large, the book is certainly worth reading and should have a place in every clinic that does laser hair removal.

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*Handbook of Contact Dermatitis*, by Matthias Gebhardt et al. 2000. ISBN 1-85317-801-2. Price £39.95. Martin Dunitz Publishers. Hardcover. 264 pages, 50 figs.

About 10% of patients visiting a dermatologist and 1% a GP have problems with contact dermatitis and/or hand eczema. Contact dermatitis is a subject in which a detailed knowledge of many areas is essential and there are many good handbooks dealing with its different aspects. It is no easy task to concentrate all this information into a small format, so this book is a compromise. The authors address the book mainly to non-specialists in dermatology. They approach the subject in the classic way with a short introduction about clinic, immunology

of allergic and irritant contact dermatitis and the basis of patch testing. Unfortunately, as is so often the case, the major mechanism behind contact dermatitis, irritation, is covered insufficiently on just 11 pages. A curious distinction is made between cumulative and traumiterative contact dermatitis, and oil-provoked pustules (oil acne) are doubtfully included as irritant dermatitis. Contact urticaria, systemic contact dermatitis, contact dermatitis in atopic dermatitis and allergic drug reactions are well covered. The main focus of the book is on aspects of allergic contact dermatitis from products (e.g. cosmetics, topical treatment, disinfectants, textile, plants and woods), different professions (e.g. health care, food processing, construction, dentistry) and from compounds such as metals. Dyes, tars and balsams are covered separately instead of being included in the textile, plant and wood chapters. There might have been more on plastics and less on dentistry. Some important occupations, such as the painting trade, are missing. Regional contact dermatitis and photoallergic contact dermatitis are covered in separate chapters and the book finishes with a survey of treatments.

In summary, this small, easy-to-read and attractive book covering the essentials of contact dermatitis contains many short but informative comments often not found in larger books. A specialist, though, needs a more complete textbook.

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*Hair and its Disorders. Biology, Pathology and Management* ed. by F. M. Camacho, V. A. Randall and V. H. Price, 2000. 407 pages, over 200 colour illustrations. ISBN 1-85317-799-7. Hardcover. Price: £75.00. Martin Dunitz Ltd, London.

Loss of hair, or too much hair in areas where hair usually should not occur, is of great concern for both healthy subjects and patients with an underlying disorder. This book gives good up-to-date reviews on several important aspects of hair. It begins with how hair forms and why it looks different in various races and areas of the body, and deals with the causes behind changes in hair colour. Various aspects on androgenic alopecia, also known as male pattern alopecia, are described in 5 chapters. Alopecia is not life-threatening, but it can cause marked psychological distress, especially when it occurs in adolescence. To be up-to date on its cause and treatment is therefore important.

Alopecia areata: its aetiology, immunobiology, the

clinical and therapy are described in 7 chapters making a certain overlapping unavoidable. Important common disorders with diffuse hair loss, such as telogen effluvium and loss induced by various drugs, are not mentioned, whereas the rare disorder Menkes disease is reviewed in 3 different chapters. The diagnosis of hair shaft abnormalities is also described in 3 chapters. Again co-operation between the authors would have avoided some repetition. Genetic hypo- and hypertrichosis as well as metabolic and nutritional deficiencies are described. The effects and side effects of shampoos, conditioners, styling of hair products, colour additives and removers are also presented. Hypertrichosis and hirsutism are other important clinical problems reviewed. Two interesting chapters on their treatment with drugs and lasers end the book.

All 36 chapters have many recent references. The colour illustrations are excellent and a good layout makes the book easy to read and to find the diagnosis suspected in a patient. The book is of value to both the clinical doctor and the researcher.

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*Acne, Diagnosis and Management* by William J. Cunliffe. 2000. ISBN 1-85317-206-5. Price: £49.95. Martin Dunitz. Hardcover. 176 pages. 200 figures.

Written by authorities in the field of acne, this is a most welcome book for the busy clinician. A concise volume, aimed particularly at the practicing clinician, this handy guide contains essential data on most aspects of acne as seen in clinical practice. The reader is provided with an update on pathogenetic mechanisms, clinical assessment and therapies in acne. The main themes of the book are illustrated by clear diagrams, charts and explicit photographs showing the diverse facets of the disease. Particularly informative are the chapters on management approaches, including topical and systemic drug therapy, and physical options in the treatment of comedones and acne scarring. For those who wish to go further into the detail, a list of references on the selected topics has been included. The book offers sensible advice and should be an attractive clinical manual not only for specialist colleagues but any clinician concerned with solving problems connected with acne.

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