

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Textbook of Atopic Dermatitis* by Sakari Reitamo, Thomas Luger and Martin Steinhoff. ISBN: 1-84184-246-X. Hbk. 269 pp. Price: £95.00. London: Informa Healthcare, 2008.

Atopic dermatitis (AD) not only has a major impact on the patient's quality of life, but also on healthcare costs. Ongoing research in the last years has brought novel insights into AD, with practical consequences now and for the future. Consequently, updated textbooks written by experts in the field, which highlight the novelties and structure progress of knowledge for the practitioner are necessary. This new *Textbook of Atopic Dermatitis*, edited by Sakari Reitamo, Thomas Luger and Martin Steinhoff, indeed draws together the latest research on the disease and its management to present the options and help that can be offered to patients. It is a comprehensive work covering nearly all aspects of AD. The 21 chapters are well structured and linked, resulting in a continuous and nicely readable style of textbook, despite its many authors. The first chapter presents an overview on the diverse clinical manifestations of AD and, thanks to its many excellent clinical photographs, even beginners in dermatology or students will be in a position to imagine what AD looks like. The following chapters illustrate in detail the immunological and genetic basis of our current understanding of AD. The authors carefully discuss the many still unsolved questions, link the role of skin barrier dysfunction with immune cell activation, such as dendritic cells (DC) and Th2 cells, and outline the current belief about how activation and inflammation is regulated in AD initiation. Numerous tables and schematic colour figures nicely summarize core messages. Subsequent chapters review current knowledge on the role of viruses, fungi and *Staphylococcus aureus*, both as important augmentation factors and as the cause of severe complications in AD. Chapters on the role of food- and inhalant allergens as trigger factors of AD complete the first part of the book.

The second half of the textbook focuses on clinical and therapeutic aspects of AD. It comprises elaborate reports on general AD treatment strategies, pathophysiology and treatment of itch, psychosomatic aspects, glucocorticosteroid treatment, phototherapy, antihistamines, systemic immunomodulation and topical calcineurin inhibitors. The authors present helpful guidelines on how to deal with difficult situations in the care of AD patients. The outlook is presented in the last chapter "Experimental therapeutic strategies", which adds to a comprehensive view of the field.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that there is a clear index, enabling this textbook also to be used as a reference book for clinicians. Although it lacks suggestions for further reading and there is some redundancy with regard to the discussion on pathophysiology, in summary, the book is enjoyable to read, meets the expectations of scientific as well as clinically interested readers and can be warmly recommended.

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