Book Reviews

Price: US $ 289.00
ISBN 978-3-8055-8429-6

Obesity is the scourge of modern civilization contributing to more deaths worldwide than any other known condition. The complex aetiopathogenesis of obesity is gradually unravelling before mankind with advances in molecular biology and genetics opening up new management avenues; this forms the basis of *Obesity and Metabolism*. The book has been divided into 18 chapters with 35 authors contributing to the effort. The initial part deals with the genetic basis of obesity delving into monogenic causes involving leptin, POMC, MC4R, *etc.*, as well as polygenic ones. The detailed dissection of culprit genes at times gets a bit difficult to grasp for the practitioner but is a veritable goldmine for researchers on the subject. The chapter titled “Genetic Obesity Syndromes” deals brilliantly with the genotypic and phenotypic characteristics of affected individuals with special emphasis on Prader-Willi syndrome. The book vividly describes the developmental origins of obesity right from maternal factors affecting the conceptus to the effects of infant nutrition. An outstanding chapter titled “Obesity in Old Age” outlines the basis, consequences and management of obesity in the elderly. The long appreciated association between type 2 diabetes mellitus and obesity has been exhaustively dealt with as has been the role of endocannabinoid system and 11β HSD in energy regulation and obesity. The position of gut hormones and adipokines has been delineated with particular adherence to ghrelin, PYY and leptin and their prospective pharmacotherapeutic denouement. The pathophysilogic role of AMP kinase has been extensively discussed with allusion to its selective modulation which might be the Holy Grail for future drug researchers. The closing chapters move from the realm of research to clinical practice with vignettes of the association of hypothyroidism, PCOS, Cushing’s syndrome and hypothalamic disorders with obesity.

The chapter on obesity treatment focusses on bariatric surgery and provides interesting insights into future molecules like recombinant variant ciliary neurotrophic factor. However, the information on Rimonabant and Sibutramine is a tad outdated following the FDA ban and SCOUT result publication respectively. About 2000 years ago, Cicero had famously remarked, “*One should eat to live, not live to eat*”, but societal influences have resulted in just the opposite culminating in the manmade pandemic of obesity. The “Sociology of Obesity” forms the penultimate chapter of this book. The book ends in a lighter vein elucidating the reflection of the obese human anatomy in the works of artists which also sheds light on the chronological evolution of obesity.

The book makes for an intriguing read and is well balanced. The elaborate dissertation on molecular and genetic concepts might be of particular interest to researchers but clinicians will also gain from its knowledge base. In conclusion, the book sheds light on the profound complexities of obesity and has the potential to stimulate the development of more effective and innovative techniques for its management.

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Price: CHF/US $ 138.00  
ISBN 978-3-8055-9302-1

Pediatric neuroendocrinology is an important area in the field of clinical endocrinology and hardly any publication...
is available addressing it as a targeted entity. This document is a testimony to the newer development and gives an insight in the field of neuroendocrinology. The development of hypothalamo-neurohypophyseal system (HNS), data extrapolated from rat genome, evolution of sexual identity and sexual orientation and newer concepts in onset of puberty including role of kisspeptin provide an enormous insight in these areas. Role of GH and IGF-1 axis in neurogenesis, metabolic action of ghrelin and role of resistin in weight homeostasis are newer worthy areas and may help in understanding the global epidemic of obesity. Genetic inputs in pathogenesis of pituitary tumours, childhood corticotropinomas and prolactinomas, though uncommon are well written and give a comprehensive overview. Overall, this volume is a treasure for those who are interested in paediatric endocrinology.

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Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) are two common clinical conditions in gastroenterology practice. In recent years, phenomenal advances have taken place in understanding pathogenesis of IBD and its management. On the other hand, understanding the pathogenesis of IBS is moving from the arena of psychosomatic disease to low grade gut inflammation, dysbiosis, abnormal gastrointestinal motility and sensation. In fact, in recent years, a subset of IBS is thought to be low grade IBD. Post-infection and small bowel bacterial overgrowth-associated IBS are other subsets of patients that suggest possible organic nature of this syndrome hitherto thought to be a functional disease. Considering these issues, it is very appropriate to have a book summarizing the current literature. Though several research papers are available for scientists working in this field, this book comprehensively describes the subject and will be of value to those working in these fascinating and challenging areas of luminal gastrointestinal diseases.

The book is divided into several chapters. These chapters deal with visceral and somatic pain- similarities and differences, molecular mechanisms of visceral hypersensitivity, role of emotion in pain, pharmacotherapy of pain, overlap between IBS and IBD, experimental models of stress and pain, placebo response in IBS, stress and IBD, acquisition, evolution and maintenance of normal gut microbiota, role of pathogenic microbes and commensal bacteria in IBS, bacterial flora in IBD, probiotics in IBD, aminosalicylates and other anti-inflammatory compounds for IBS, eosinophilic esophagitis, mast cell and mastocytosis and collagenous and lymphocytic colitis. All the chapters are written by experts in the field most of whom are astute clinicians as well as innovators and original researchers. There are several Figures, Tables and Flow-charts, which make the book reasonably easy to read.

Some points about this book need particular mention. The book is a concise review of extensive amount of published papers in the field. There are several chapters with varied coverage of the two important diseases, IBD and IBS. Further, this book has a “bench to bedside approach” in which the basic research is covered and extended to clinical applications. The book also gives future direction to the research in this area. This book will be an important asset to clinicians trying to remain up-to-date in IBS and IBD, postgraduate students and clinical and basic researchers.

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New drugs and targets for asthma and COPD, T. Hansel, J. Barnes, editors (Karger, Basel, Switzerland) 2010. 310 pages. Price: CHF/US $ 248.00 ISBN 978-3-8055-9566-7

The book is published as Volume 39 in the series - Progress in Respiratory Research (Ed. - CT Bolliger). The earlier volume (No. 31) on the same subject in the series was published about ten years ago in 2001. The second version was necessary in view of the rapid developments which have taken place in the last decade in the treatment of asthma and COPD.
There are 41 chapters on various aspects of the new drugs used in asthma and COPD. These drugs and targets have been discussed under several sections based on their mechanism of action, such as the bronchodilators, the IgE and epithelial directed approaches, T-cell co-stimulator blockade, cytokines, chemokines, antioxidants, enzyme inhibitors, protease inhibitors, nucleic acids and inhibitors of fibroin, vessels, cell signaling and transcription. This is a very comprehensive and in-depth approach to the drugs leaving little beyond the scope of the subject. It is an eye-opener to know of the varied and wide arena of potential treatments available for these diseases.

It makes an excellent reading not only for those interested in research and development of new drugs but also for clinicians involved in disease-management. It does not talk about the treatment protocols or guidelines but about the mechanisms, potential roles and pitfalls of different drugs which one employs in treatment. It also provides an insight into the future possibilities of preventive and even curative treatment for allergy and airways remodeling.

The introductory chapter by the two editors of the volume provides a concise summary of the contents. It talks about the different mechanisms of pathogenesis and the application of translational medicine to the management of these two disorders. The brief but highly referenced overview is enough for a quick browsing of the contents. The subsequent chapters provide an in-depth analysis of each drug and target of treatment.

The book is of immense value for respiratory-pharmacologists and immunobiologists. Each chapter begins with the basic pharmacological structure of the molecule and their mechanisms of actions and ends with annual studies and human clinical trials. There are a large number of figures especially of pharmacological structures and drug-targets. Some of the drugs which are discussed are already available in the therapeutic armamentarium, while others remain the subject of future in the pipeline.

The only difficulty which was encountered related to the discussion on the two diseases (asthma and COPD) together in different chapters. This had resulted in frequent overlaps and switch-overs from asthma to COPD and vice-versa. This was possibly because of the several commonalities resulting in an obliteration of differences in the two diseases with reference to their pathogenesis and treatment made necessary. But at times, one needs to be careful to translate a target or a treatment for one of the two obstructive disorders.

Overall, this is an excellent introduction to what has happened in the last 8-10 years and what is likely to happen in the next decade in the treatment of airway obstruction. It seems that the drug companies will remain busy with a rapid turn around of new drugs and molecules. The presentation and printing are also attractive with clear coloured figures, flow-diagrams and tables. It is a valuable book for the respiratory research workers, pharmacologists and physicians.

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