Concise pediatric and adolescent hepatology, A. Dhawan, editor (Karger, Basel, Switzerland) 264 pages. Price: US $ 233.00 / CHF 198.00 ISBN 978-3-8055-9829-3

This book, the 16th volume in the book series, “Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine” is dedicated to liver diseases in children and adolescents. Over a span of 250 odd pages the book manages to span the length, breadth and to an extent even depth of paediatric hepatology.

It covers the ‘classic’ topics of various cholestatic liver diseases of infants, autoimmune liver disease, Wilson’s disease, viral hepatitis and acute liver failure adequately. A practical approach to the diagnosis and management of these common disorders is a highlight of the book; however, the emerging problems, that are more pertinent to the modern era of paediatric hepatology, like intestinal failure and total parenteral nutrition (TPN)-related liver disease and liver transplantation (LT) including auxiliary liver transplantation, are expounded in a masterly manner.

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) in particular is dealt with in the relevant paediatric perspective with respect to approach and management. The pathophysiology of intestinal failure and TPN-related liver disease is extensively discussed along with medical and surgical approaches to prevent and treat associated liver disease, backed by an extensive review of literature. The chapter on liver transplantation elucidates the pre-intraoperative and post-transplant issues and also debates the various options available for LT along with their pros and cons. The long term concerns in long term transplant survivors are nicely discussed.

Acute liver failure is dealt with comprehensively, touching all relevant areas, from aetiology to management. Similarly, the clinical and therapeutic aspects of the progressive familial intrahepatic cholestasis (PFIC) syndrome, are backed by a detailed elucidation of the genetic and molecular basis of the disorders. A fresh look at the aetiopathogenesis in the light of current evidence, makes the age-old topic of biliary atresia also a very interesting read. The pathophysiology of the multisystem involvement in Alagille syndrome is nicely linked once again to its genetic basis.

Another chapter is devoted to the primary malignancies of the liver in children and an optimal approach to the same is presented. The book also addresses, the less commonly dealt with topics of immune deficiency-related liver diseases, non-viral infections of the liver and non-cirrhotic portal hypertension; the latter being of a particular importance to paediatricians.

The concluding chapter on the "Omics” gene therapy and hepatocyte transplantation brings us to the exciting cutting edge advances in the field of molecular biology and therapeautics. Hepatocyte transplantation has been especially dealt with in considerable depth.

The book is a refreshing blend of traditional and modern concepts with the natural history, approach and management being discussed in the light of current advances in the understanding of pathophysiology, molecular basis of disease as well as modern technology. The psychological and psychosocial aspects of dealing with children and especially adolescents with chronic liver disease- an integral part of management in the current scenario, given the longevity granted to these children by advances in molecular and surgical technology have been incorporated. The importance of keeping in mind the biopsychosocial environment of the child with chronic liver disease (the influence of family, friends, school and society on the disease), especially
compliance with medical advice (the potential problems that can arise) and the need to assess the coping ability of the child within his/her specific environment are highlighted. The only lacuna in the book is the lack of inherited metabolic liver diseases, which probably would be the subject of another “concise” volume.

The content of this volume is thus relevant to current paediatric hepatology practice. The strength of the book is an extensive relook at the pathophysiology of several of the disorders which provides new insight into these topics. This is balanced by a practical and current approach to management. Surgical aspects of paediatric hepatology receive their fair share of space, while maintaining continuity of content. The bibliography is adequate, given the constraint to keep the volume concise. The major objective of the book, to elucidate the natural history of childhood liver diseases in the context of modern advances as well as current needs, is adequately fulfilled. The book bears the unmistakable imprint of several of the experts in the field of paediatric hepatology from across the world. Overall, this is an easy to read and refreshing treatise which comprehensively fills the gaps in knowledge of not only trainee but also practicing paediatricians and paediatric hepatologists.

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Inflammatory bowel diseases: Microbiota versus the barrier, E.F. Stange, A. Dignass, K. Fellermann, K. Herrlinger, editors (Karger, Basel, Switzerland) 2013. 136 pages. Price: US $ 96.00 / CHF 82.00 / EUR 68.00  

This book presents the proceedings of the Falk symposium 188 held in Stuttgart, Germany, in June 2013. The first section, “The Gut Microbiota and the Mucosa in IBD” covers evolution of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), the evolution of human microbiome, host defenses, and the host-flora relationship.

Under the second section, “The Gut Barrier in IBD: The First Line of Defense” the chapter on intestinal stem cells provides an interesting insight into the topic and the roles of Paneth cells, Lgr5 receptor and Wnt pathway. In the chapter on “Innate Immune Functions of α-Defensins in the Small Intestine”, the role of two α-defensins secreted by Paneth cells (HD5 and HD6) and how their reduction may be related to causation of ileal Crohn’s disease are elucidated. The chapter on mucus and goblet cell details the importance of MUC2 protein and net-like inner mucus layer, which acts as a size exclusion filter excluding bacteria (important in ulcerative colitis). The chapter, “Defective Antibacterial Barrier in Inflammatory Bowel Disease” discusses the components of intestinal barrier including antimicrobial peptides (secreted by goblet and Paneth cells) and role of defective antibacterial barrier in the pathogenesis of IBD.

The third section, “The Gut Barrier in IBD: The Second Line of Defense” discusses the role of innate and adaptive immune systems and the role of granulocytes and T and B lymphocytes. The fourth section, “Diagnostics and Prognostics in IBD” deals with the role of faecal markers, calprotectin and lactoferrin, various imaging modalities in IBD and the role of endoscopy in prognostication in IBD.

The fifth section addresses the differences in treatment guidelines in IBD. It addresses three controversial issues in the management of IBD: the role of mesalamine in Crohn’s disease, early use of anti-TNF (tumour necrosis factor) therapy in Crohn’s disease and management of acute severe ulcerative colitis. The sixth section deals with well-known adverse events of drugs used in IBD, while the last section discusses the treatment of microbiota and/or the barrier. This includes the role of antibiotics and probiotics. There is an interesting chapter on the use of lecithin as a therapeutic agent in ulcerative colitis. The last chapter deals with the therapeutic use of Trichuris suis ova in IBD.

Overall, the book is well written and the first three sections are outstanding in that these contribute to the understanding of basic pathogenesis of IBD. The notable missing chapter is on faecal microbiota transplantation. However, it is a very useful book and may be of special interest in academic gastroenterology departments.

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This book is a part of the volume 15 of the ongoing series “Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine”. The book provides eminently readable and practical information, presented clearly. It includes chapters on classification, clinical features and differential diagnostics of atopic dermatitis, risk factors and epidemiology, clinical impact of current genetics findings, immunology and pathophysiology, psychological factors, neuroimmunology and itch, role of food allergy, inhalant allergy, infections and bacterial colonisation including treatment, topical treatment, systemic therapies, occupational aspects, educational programmes for children with atopic dermatitis and their parents.

The classification of atopy into intrinsic and extrinsic types is well presented. The significance of filaggrin gene mutation and its relationship to epidermal barrier and inflammatory processes is well explained. The role of genetic factors in filaggrin mutation and immunology, psychological factors and itch and food allergy with atopic dermatitis is explained well. The concept of atopic march to bronchial asthma is clarified as simultaneous occurrence of two disorders rather than uncontrolled atopic dermatitis progressing to bronchial asthma. Chapters on topical and systemic therapy are well written but not comprehensive. The chapter on educational programmes for children with atopic dermatitis and their parents highlights the need for the educational aspect in addition to medication for this chronic disease. Overall, this book is an update on atopic dermatitis and will serve dermatologists, paediatricians, allergy specialists taking care of atopic dermatitis patients and is also recommended for medical college libraries.

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