

**Diagnosis and management of pituitary tumors**

K. Thapar, K. Kovacs, B.W. Scheithauer, R.V. Lloyd, editors

Humana Press, Totowa, New Jersey, 2001 496 pp, 325 illustrations

ISBN: 0-89603-403-8

Price: USD 225.- Hardcover

During the last decades significant advances in the knowledge of the hypothalamic- and pituitary-tumors have evolved. This well-written book represents probably the most comprehensive updated knowledge in all the fields of pituitary tumors. With a collection of carefully selected authoritative contributors the editors have succeeded in meeting the need of a distillate of the huge and ever-increasing literature on the subject.

The book is divided into 25 chapters with 325 illustrations. The first chapters present a thorough historical survey of the topics, an overview of normal anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology of the pituitary gland. This is followed by reviews of all aspects of diagnosis and management of pituitary adenomas, including neuro-ophthalmologic evaluation, positron emission tomography and radiation therapy of pituitary tumors. The last chapters focus on sellar tumors other than adenomas and the tumor-like lesions of the sellar region. These chapters are compiled as a compendium with relevant imaging of MRI, CT-scans and micropathology, with a high applicability in the clinical practice. The chapter dedicated to imaging of pituitary tumors includes several MRI figures of mediocre quality. Use of modern high resolution MRI technique and more focus on the advances in imaging technique could have enhanced this chapter.

As a neurosurgeon, I believe that the advances in surgical techniques should be a matter of thorough interest. A more extensive section dedicated to the endoscopic approaches to the pituitary gland, would therefore have been a nice addition. However, these minor objections do not affect the overall good impression of the book. Each chapter is written by different authors, but the text flows nicely, and though some chapters seem more copious than the clinical relevance entitles, the chapters complement each other very well.

The best outcome in the management of pituitary tumors results from a thoughtful multidisciplinary cooperation by knowledgeable physicians of various disciplines. This book represents essential reading and a good reference source for everyone dealing with pituitary patients. Though the precise role of radiotherapy in the management of pituitary tumors remains ill-defined, it seems that introduction of stereotactic radiosurgery has increased the numbers of patients who benefit from oncological treatment. As an obvious member of a team that handles patients with pituitary tumors, the oncologist must be up-dated, not only in the field of radiotherapy, but also in the whole spectrum of molecular and structural biology, endocrine diagnosis and treatment, high resolution imaging, microsurgical technique. This book will comply all needs.

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**Handbook of bone marrow transplantation**

J. Rowe, H. Lazarus, A. Carella, editors

Martin Dunitz Inc., 2000 232 pp, 24 bl/w. illustrations

ISBN: 1-85317-899-6

Price: GBP 39.95.- Hardcover

This book deals with various aspects of bone marrow transplantation, including peripheral blood stem cell mobilization, CD34 + cell selection and ex vivo expansion, matched unrelated donor transplantation, non-myeloablative stem cell transplantation, gene transfer and sources of stem cells. All chapters give a rather concise review of their topic. In particular the chapters contributed by members of the Seattle group, e.g. chapter 3: 'Matched unrelated marrow transplantation' by Woolfrey et al., and chapter 6: 'Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation in older adults' by Molina & Storb, dealing with standard autologous and allogeneic stem cell transplantation and describing the development of the non-myeloablative approach, are highly recommendable. In the latter chapter, the figures comparing age distribution curves of patients who undergo autologous and allogeneic stem cell transplantation for various diseases respectively, with the age curves at the time of diagnosis of these diseases, clearly illustrate the selection problem in BMT, leading towards mini transplant. In chapter 5, by Carella & Giralt, on non-myeloablative regimens, a printing error makes the busulfan dose in the Slavin regimen 16 mg/kg, which is the fully myeloablative dose for standard allogeneic transplant. Also, the chapter ends by strongly emphasizing that side-effects of these therapies are uncommon. Many transplanters, including this reviewer, will certainly not agree with this statement. On the whole, however, this collection of essays on BMT can be recommended, both to younger members of the transplant team and to the haematologists and oncologists referring patients to BMT units.

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**Prostate specific antigen**

M.K. Brawer, editor

Marcel Dekker Inc., 2001 344 pp

ISBN: 0-8247-0555-6

Price: USD 150.- (approx.)

Prostate specific antigen (PSA) has become a most valuable tool for detection and monitoring of prostate cancer during the last decade. However, with the increasing use of PSA many new problems and questions have arisen. Michael K. Brawer, Director of the Northwest Prostate Institute in Seattle, has brought together several world known authorities to elaborate on different aspects of PSA. Although PSA (almost entirely) is prostate specific, it is not tumour specific. This means that a man with elevated serum PSA levels does not necessarily have a prostatic malignancy. If we can further improve the specificity of the PSA

test many men would be spared unnecessary prostatic biopsies. Several ways of increasing the specificity of PSA, such as PSA density, PSA velocity, age-specific reference ranges and percent-free PSA, are described in detail in the book. Early detection of prostate cancer before extracapsular tumour growth has occurred is mandatory if curatively intended treatment should be offered to the patient. Possible future improvements in early detection and staging of prostate cancer, including human kallikrein 2 (hK2) and prostate specific membrane antigen (PSMA), are debated. In other chapters the value of serum PSA in the clinical follow-up of patients after different treatment modalities is discussed.

As often when many authors are involved many facts are repeated, in particular in the introduction of each chapter. For the researcher or clinician with a special interest in PSA this book is very valuable. It covers the whole area and includes an up-to-date reference list, but for the majority of clinicians I do think this book is dispensable. Many of the described every day clinical problems involving PSA are illuminated in a comprehensive but compressed way in modern textbooks about prostate cancer. These books will provide sufficient knowledge about PSA for the common oncologist, urologist or general practitioner dealing with prostate cancer patients.

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#### **Breast cancer—New horizons in research and treatment**

Tobias, Houghton and Henderson, editors  
Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., 2000 354 pp  
ISBN: 0-340-74216-X (HB)  
Price: GBP 85.- Hardbound

In the foreword of the book Michael Baum describes his mother's breast cancer which was diagnosed 25 years ago when he was in the middle of his career as a surgeon. Her breast cancer—which was diagnosed in an advanced stage—is compared with the early breast cancer diagnosed in his sister 7 years ago, which was treated with conservative surgery and modern radiotherapy. The differences in the diagnostics, treatment and the outcome illustrate the evolution in the field of breast cancer during the last decades.

'Breast Cancer—New horizons in research and treatment' thoroughly elucidates the broad field of breast cancer. The different chapters describe epidemiology, prognostic and predictive factors,

early detection, prevention, the role of axillary surgery, adjuvant radiotherapy, chemotherapy (neo adjuvant and adjuvant) and hormonal therapy. The last section of the book deals with issues related to quality of life for the breast cancer women.

As always when many contributors write the different chapters all parts are not fully up-dated. Mammography is presented in an interesting way with pros and cons in two consecutive chapters. Radiotherapy is mainly described in a perspective of indications without information about techniques and possibilities with modern conformal radiotherapy and IMRT. The chapters about chemotherapy and hormonal treatments are solid and informative.

To summarize, the book is well-written and gives an assessable overview of the broad field of breast cancer. The book is worth reading by all physicians involved in the handling of the breast cancer patients.

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#### **Pathology of the aging human nervous system**

S. Duckett, J. De la Torre, editors  
Oxford University Press, 2001 624 pp  
ISBN: 0-19-513069-3  
Price: USD 119.-

This volume deals not only with the ageing of the nervous system but also diseases during ageing and related neurobiological aspects. Thus covered are circulatory, degenerative, toxic, metabolic, immunological, infectious and traumatic conditions as well as peripheral and autonomic nervous system and muscle diseases. One chapter deals with brain tumours in the elderly, discussing even progenitor cells in a thought provoking part on the aetiology, imaging and molecular pathobiological principles. From a purely oncological point of view it may thus be of limited interest although it provides a wider outlook on brain problems sometimes coexisting with tumours. Authored by renowned scientists and with a senior editorial board of very high standing it offers a general neurobiological text of high quality.

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