

**Pediatric Allergy: Principles and Practice.** Donald YM Leung MD PhD, Hugh A Sampson MD, Raif S Geha MD, Stanley J Szeffler MD. St Louis: Mosby. 2003. Hard cover, illustrated, 688 pages, \$89.95.

Atopic diseases such as asthma, allergy, and anaphylaxis are important and growing problems in the pediatric population. Discoveries of the mechanisms of development of atopic and primary immunodeficiency diseases are some of the success stories in the field of pediatric allergy/immunology. In addition, therapies for atopic and primary immunodeficiency diseases have recently undergone exciting new changes. Given the groundbreaking nature of these scientific and therapeutic breakthroughs, it is strange that until now there has not been a reference book dedicated solely to the field of pediatric allergy. The goal of the editors of this textbook was to document and summarize the numerous recent changes in the field of pediatric allergy/immunology. Leung et al have fulfilled their aims and admirably filled a void in the allergy literature.

This textbook includes 60 well defined chapters. Topics include basic immunologic mechanisms of disease, primary immunodeficiencies and their therapies, diagnosis and treatment of allergic diseases, upper airway disease, asthma, food allergy, skin and eye disorders, and drug allergy/anaphylaxis. The breadth of coverage is impressive and complete. The book's organization assists in its readability. Each heading is subdivided into several chapters, allowing for full discussions of the topics.

Rare diseases such as eosinophilic gastroenteritis and autoimmune lymphoproliferative disease receive complete discussions. The section on food allergies includes chapters on "Prevention and Natural History of Food Allergy" and "Approach to Feeding Problems in the Infant and Young Child," which are often missed in adult allergy reference books. In addition, the authors and editors placed new emphasis on some topics, making the discussions particularly appropriate to pediatrics. One such chapter is "Asthma and the Athlete," in which the emphasis is on controlling baseline asthma rather than on episodic use of quick-relief medications. This approach allows for the

spontaneity of childhood play, because asthma can be difficult to pre-treat with  $\beta$  agonists.

The book's target audience is physicians practicing in allergy/immunology, but the practicing pediatrician will find this an excellent reference as well. Nurses and allied health practitioners will appreciate the patient education references and Web site links for specific topics. The strengths of this book include conclusion tables (at the end of each chapter) entitled "Key Concepts," which are excellent for quick reference. In addition, the text is replete with outstanding treatment algorithms. Tables of the differential diagnoses of specific disease processes are found in most chapters dedicated to diagnosis and treatment. These tables will be useful to both the pediatric and internal-medicine-trained allergist who cares for children. Another strength of **Pediatric Allergy: Principles and Practice** is how readable and clear it truly is.

My favorite chapter was Chapter 57, "Drug Allergy." Extensive algorithms, skin-testing procedures, and desensitization protocols make this chapter a treasure trove of information for the practicing allergist. The surprising up-to-date Web site references throughout the text are also greatly appreciated. In addition, the food allergy appendix is particularly helpful as an education tool for patients.

The editors found superb authors for most chapters. In particular the chapters on complement deficiencies and epidemiology of allergic diseases were highly readable and maintained a clinical rather than basic science emphasis. The editors also included provocative chapters on gene therapy and stem cell therapeutics, which are currently only treatment possibilities of the future, but because of their high degree of promise and the ethical considerations involved in their use I found myself appreciating their inclusion in the book. The only chapter that failed to fulfill its promise is the one on Epstein-Barr virus; justification for its inclusion in the textbook was not clearly delineated.

Each chapter's author strove to reference the best pediatric studies. In fact, whenever possible, the authors did an admirable job of avoiding referencing adult studies. The pediatric adage that "children are not just

little adults" was heeded throughout the book. References are well balanced between classic, landmark reports, and new studies. In addition, the index allows for quick referencing, as it is very complete. Rare syndromes are included in the index, and major subjects such as rhinitis are sub-indexed for easy finding of specific topics.

However, I did find myself repeatedly wishing for a table (at the end of each chapter or in the appendixes) of the dosages of the medications mentioned by chapter authors. That bit of additional organization would have made the book much more handy for the practicing clinician. In addition, the chapters on the basic science underlying various topics were quite dense, and summary tables at the end of each subsection would have strengthened the readability of these chapters.

This textbook is surprisingly inexpensive, considering its depth and breadth. It is certainly a competitive price compared to such adult allergy reference tomes as *Middleton's Allergy: Principles & Practice* or *Patterson's Allergic Diseases*.

In summary, **Pediatric Allergy: Principles and Practice** is an outstanding reference book that deserves to be in the library of every practicing pediatric allergist/immunologist and primary care pediatrician. Allied health professionals will find the patient education materials quite helpful. While delineating basic pathophysiologic mechanisms of disease, the authors retained a high degree of clinical utility. I look forward to future editions of the textbook as the field of pediatric allergy continues to evolve.

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**Childhood Asthma and Other Wheezing Disorders**, 2nd edition. Michael Silverman, editor. London: Arnold. 2002. Hard cover, illustrated, 484 pages, \$125.

Asthma and associated respiratory illnesses in which wheezing is a primary symp-