Book Reviews

Rona M. MacKie
Clinical Dermatology

The third edition of this small 364-page textbook has been revised and rewritten. Lavishly illustrated in full colour it provides medical students and young dermatologists with a very useful updated tool in the difficult field of skin biology as well as in the management of skin conditions. I like the tables, clear and nicely presented, the short insets and above all the ‘growth points’ which offer the most recent advances, in a few lines, in various skin areas.

Inexpensive and well done, this book is a bargain (hardback E 30; paperback E 14.95).

R. Baran, Cannes

LA.A. Hunter, J.A. Savin, M.V. Dahl
Clinical Dermatology

This is one of several new textbooks on clinical dermatology intended for students and doctors, particularly those in general medicine and those starting to train. Because many of these books are excellent, it has become increasingly difficult to recommend which book to start with in clinical dermatology. For those that are prepared to read an English text, it is without any reservation that I strongly recommend this book as the number one choice.

In 262 pages published entirely in colour the three authors give a clear overview of clinical dermatology with emphasis on diagnosis and management. The text is supported by extensive use of excellent colour photographs and diagrams, and at the end of each of the 42 chapters a number of ‘learning points’ are included. To avoid too many trade names, selected preparations are tabulated in a ‘formulary’ at the back of the book.

My only major criticism of the book is the rather short and traditionally organized chapter on ‘Diagnosis of Skin Disorders’. Because many students and doctors in training find it difficult to develop a differential diagnosis, this chapter would have gained by including a problem-oriented approach to the diagnosis.

The authors and the publisher should be congratulated with this outstanding piece of work. Hopefully, it will find a wide audience and become one of the top choices for students and doctors in dermatology training. Also, a copy should be present in all institutions teaching dermatology.

Knud Kragballe, Aarhus
Philippe Grandjean
Skin Penetration
Hazardous Chemicals at Work
Taylor & Francis, Hampshire 1990 IX + 188 pp.; E 27.00 ISBN 0-85066-834-1

This book corresponds to a compilation of reports generated during the period 1983-1989 under a project funded by the Commission of the European Communities. The author, professor of
Environmental Medicine at Odense University, Denmark, was responsible for reviewing the scientific literature and preparing reports through the International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals and the Environmental Chemicals Data Information Network.

This book consists of 14 chapters, divided into two sections: mechanisms of percutaneous absorption and methodology; review of the different classes of hazardous chemicals and problems caused by skin contact. The introductory chapter (section A) presents the principles and fundamentals of percutaneous absorption, methods for evaluating its relevance and preventive approaches against chemicals that may constitute a skin hazard. In section B, 12 chapters review the potential toxicity of about 300 industrial chemicals that may be absorbed through the skin. Relevant data are evaluated according to a general format and each chapter is on specific classes of chemicals: (2) inorganic and organometal compounds; (3) simple aliphatic compounds; (4) halogenated aliphatic compounds; (5) aliphatic amides, nitriles and amines; (6) isocyclic hydrocarbons, alcohols and related compounds; (7) halogenated cyclic compounds; (8) isocyclic amines; (9) organic nitro compounds and nitrates; (10) other nitrogen compounds; (11) heterocyclic oxygen and sulfur compounds; (12) organo-phosphorus compounds; (13) organic sulfur compounds.

Emphasis is laid on compounds that are considered major skin hazards, and for these chemicals, on the basis of an international survey, the following informations are given: skin exposure potential, i.e. production, utilization and risks, physicochemical properties of the compounds, experimental data including in vitro percutaneous absorption studies and pharmacotoxicological data in animals, human data and recommendations for an improved protection.

Attempts are made in the last chapter to define criteria for the evaluation and classification of either known or potential skin penetration hazards.

The author should be congratulated for his effort in compiling this book and for the clear presentation of the different classes of chemicals. One could however argue that the two sections are unequal and the first chapter on percutaneous absorption could have been more documented. This book is a very useful source of information for those working with hazardous chemicals, and it should result in an improved protection against percutaneous absorption of toxic chemicals.

H. Schaefer, Valbonne

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Book Reviews

Pascual Abenoza, A. Bernard Ackerman

Neoplasms with Eccrine Differentiation

Ackerman’s Histologic Diagnosis of Neoplastic Skin Diseases: A Method by Pattern Analysis

This is the first in a series of monographs entitled Histologic Diagnosis of Neoplastic Skin Diseases: A Method by Pattern Analysis announced by A. Bernard Ackerman. The authors apply the method based upon recognition of patterns to the diagnosis of eccrine neoplasms, a method which proved reliable in inflammatory skin diseases and warranted the success of the first book of A.B. Ackerman published by Lea & Febiger in 1978.

Chapters 1-3 recall the principles of diagnosis in dermatopathology, embryology of the skin and histology of eccrine units. The development of hair follicles, nails and symbiotic cells of the epidermis (melanocytes, Langerhans’ and Merkel cells) is also treated, although this does not suit the main topic. Concerning the eccrine secretory cells with a clear reticulated cytoplasm, I
do not consider them as a rare normal histologic variant: patients with such eccrine glands have a disturbed peripheral thermolysis, due to an impaired evaporation rate of the excreted sweat [J Invest Dermatol 1980;74:455-456] and are exposed to heatstroke. I liked the presentation of poroid cells, which seem to belong more to the continuous epidermis than to the acrosyringeal spiral: the close relationship of these cells and the neighboring keratinocytes (fig. 3-20) is strengthened by a recent publication on immunohistochemical features of poromas [Arch Dermatol Res 1991;283:300-309]; in these neoplasms, the cytokeratin expression pattern of acrosyringeal cells is less present than the pattern of cyto-keratins of basal keratinocytes and cells surrounding acrosyringia. The chapter on non-neoplastic alterations of eccrine units is really exciting, and I found in it a lot of original information. The mucinous syringo-metaplasia has its own clinicopathologic peculiarities, and I would classify it as an entity among the eccrine neoplasms (Kwittken’s tumor). Eccrine nevi and other hamartomatous conditions are excluded from the contents of the book. Benign eccrine neoplasms are thoroughly treated in chapters 6-13: poromas, syringomas, spiradenomas, cylindromas, fibroadenomas, mixed tumors, hidradenomas and papillary tubular adenomas. The experience I have with syringoacanthoma would lead me to consider it as the fifth poroid neoplasm rather than as an hidroacanthoma simplex with a pronounced epidermal hyperplasia (fig. 6, 7 and p. 157). I would also discuss the case of figures 6-47: this tumor shares some features of infundibular adenoma with differentiation toward acrotrichial cells and sebaceous cells and ducts. I am curious to see how these follicular poromas will be presented and discussed in future monographs. An important information given in these chapters is that e.g. spiradenomas, cylindromas, mixed tumors of sweat glands or hidradenomas exhibit more often apocrine than eccrine differentiations, and they will be treated again in the forthcoming issue of this series.

Malignant neoplasms related to eccrine units are treated in chapters 14-23. The authors consider at least 10 variants: 5 of them are mixed tumors, cylindromas, spiradenomas, hidradenomas and papillary adenomas with aggressive biologic behavior, and the puzzling problem is the recognition of malignancy. Adenocarcinomas of eccrine sweat glands with peculiar traits providing the clue for diagnosis are syringomatous carcinomas, porocarcinomas, adenoid cystic carcinomas, mucinous carcinomas and primary adenocarcinomas with signet-ring cells. Although rare, 30-50% of all porocarcinomas are associated with poromas, and this allows to teach that poromas should always be completely removed. The mucinous carcinoma and the signet-ring carcinoma remain a dilemma: both occur mainly in the periorbital area and are mucin-secreting epithelial cancers; their silhouettes are complementary; however, the former does not exhibit signet-ring cells, and in the latter the cells never float in mucin pools. For each chapter the authors provide an extensive and up-to-dated bibliography and a wonderful festival of demonstrative black-and-white figures. The presentation and the style are highly didactic as the performances issued from the Dermatopathology Laboratory at New York University School of Medicine usually are. I spent some sunny afternoons in my garden reading this book, and I enjoyed being the reviewer and having the favor of keeping this first issue of a promising series.

E. Grosshans, Strasbourg
Robert M. Adams
Occupational Skin Disease
The second edition of Robert Adams’ Occupational Dermatology is in fact an entirely new book. The main author is surrounded by 43 outstanding coworkers from various countries.
It is certainly – at the present time – the most complete review in the field. Very often in the past, books of that nature were limited to occupational contact dermatitis. The author has widened the landscape: all skin diseases – provoked or worsened by occupation – are quoted in detail. Therefore, this book is intended to be read by a broad variety of scientists: dermatologists, occupational physicians, occupational safety officers and also chemists working in industry. The mass of theoretical and practical information is huge; a plentiful harvest of references is a valuable additional source of information.

The inclusion of diseases such as psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, occupational connective tissue disorders or occupational nail disorders is an interesting way of reintroducing occupational dermatology in the life of general dermatology. Contact dermatitis is – of course – the heart of the book: most irritants and allergens are quoted in full detail (including e.g. chemical formulation, main sources and uses).

My own prediction is that the book is and will be accompanied by a chorus of praise. Most readers will derive benefit from keeping it constantly on a shelf within hand reach. The only black spots I can see are: (a) the poor quality of some black-and-white photographs of clinical conditions and (b) the uselessness of figures illustrating for instance work places, or working procedures, the educational value of such documents being – in my view – hypothetical.

In summary, a remarkable book, quite exclusive in the dermato-logical literature.

J.M. Lachapelle, Bruxelles

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