

*Book review**O. Braun-Falco et al: Dermatologie und venerologie*

Dermatologie und Venerologie, Springer Medizin Verlag Heidelberg, 2005, 5th Edition. The main authors O. Braun-Falco, G. Plewig H.H. Wolff, W H.C. Burgdorf and M. Landthaler, 1583 pages. The materials are ordered into XV Sections and 109 chapters with 940 mostly colored photos, the main authors were assisted by 98 coauthors. The text is completely in German.

The titles of the Sections are: I. Fundamentals, II. Infectious diseases, III. Intolerance, IV. Inflammatory conditions, V. Conditions provoked by environment, VI. Bullous disorders, VII. Disorders of connective tissue, VIII. Further hereditary disorders, IX. Affections of vessels, X. Disorders of pigmentation, XI. Disorders of skin appendages, XII. Regional and special disorders, XIII Metabolic disorders, XIV. Tumors, XV. Treatment

The merit of the present textbook is the fact that the authors were able to bridge the gap between the clinical medicine and huge advance of basic sciences including biochemistry, molecular biology, immunology and genetics. The main clinical observations pertaining to single dermatological conditions have been meticulously watched and described observing the famous European dermatological tradition. Since the last German edition in 1996 the understanding of pathogenesis, has in many instances essentially changed. Even the diagnostic laboratory tests, used to certify a diagnosis became highly sophisticated and complicated, so that the clinician working at the bedside or in an ambulance need adequate explanations. All the listed facts caused a considerable shift in classification of diseases.

The first author enjoys both, the reputation of a hard working scientist, and as an erudite clinician. He has been able to influence a few generation of dermatologists to devote their lives to dermatology and venereology. A further factor that has contributed to the high standards of clinical dermatology and venereology in

Germany is the fact that the Medical system there still allows a reasonable long stay of patients in hospitals that is necessary for a complete observation and evaluation of a disorder, as well as to follow the outcome of treatment. Such approach allows for a minimal number of hospitalized patients that are necessary for a reputable teaching process.

The relatively short Textbook can successfully compete with the existing much larger editions. It is suitable for studying dermatology as well as for use as a compendium in every-day clinical work with patients. The book is easy understandable and comprehensive to medically educated persons and serves well the needs of students, residents as well of clinical and practicing dermatologists. The clinical photos are of excellent quality, a number of them have appeared already in preexisting editions. The carefully prepared diagrams as well as the tables supplement the text Certain explanations, though simplified to a certain extent, contribute to a better understanding

O. Braun-Falco about 30 years directed the University Dermatological Department in Munich and together with his one time associates and presently friends, represents a very powerful intellectual group of dermatologists. They succeeded to prepare a competent textbook that will help the clinicians to keep abreast with the progress in basic medicine, still reminding dermatologists, that their primary task is to establish the diagnosis and to introduce the adequate treatment.

We firmly believe that an English Edition of the textbook would be welcome.

Aleksej Kansky