BOOK REVIEWS

O.E.S.O.: The Esophagogastric Junction: 420 Questions-420 Answers. Chief Editor: Robert Giuli; editors: Jean-Paul Galmiche, Glyn G. Jamieson, and Carmelo Scarpignato. John Libbey Eurotext, Paris, 1998, 1591 pp., $174.00. ISBN: 2-7420-0145-X.

This is the fifth book by the O.E.S.O. International Organization for Statistical Studies on Diseases of the Esophagus. The book has an interesting format, which has been used by Professor Robert Giuli to address other diseases related to esophagology. The editor has developed 420 questions, and assigned these to distinguished esophagologists for their response. The 420 answers are by 164 contributors from all over the world. Topics are divided into numerous problem areas related to the esophagus, such as anatomy, physiology, pressure measurements, evaluation of the LES, pH measurements, manometry, etc. There are questions related to particular problems in medical therapy, long-term therapy, refractory esophagitis, the postsurgical gastroesophageal junction, and so forth. The treatise is exhaustive. The questions are relevant, and the answers usually are several page in length. There is an excellent section on Barrett’s epithelium and lower esophageal stenosis.

This book is for esophagologists, and certainly 420 questions and answers related to the EG junction lend themselves to great in-depth analysis. The questions are relevant, and the answers superbly constructed. Initially, I was turned off by the whole concept, but in reading through sections of interest, I found the answers useful and informative.

I doubt that many gastroenterologists/hcpatologists will be willing to dedicate the time to study all 420 questions and answers. However, the treatise is a useful source of information dealing with technical aspects of esophagology.

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The Scientist as Consultant: Building New Career Opportunities. Carl J. Sindermann and Thomas K. Sawyer. Plenum Publishing, New York, 1997, $29.95. ISBN: 0-306-45637-0.

This is an interesting treatise for scientists or physicians considering work as scientific consultants. With the down-sizing of the scientific work force, there have been new opportunities created which are available for MDs and PhDs. This book captures the essence of scientific consultation, and sketches particulars about the field, such as organizing and managing a consulting group, professional ethics, objectivity, data collection and analysis, balanced interpretation of data, marketing strategies for technical skills, performing as an expert witness in legal proceedings, international consulting, and other aspects.

The book is organized into three parts. The first is a broad perspective on scientific consulting as a career, the second, specific operational considerations, and the third, special topics. There is one topic on university faculty as scientific consultants, retirees as scientific consultants, and the future of scientific consulting. This is an easily read, informative treatise; there is not much on gastroenterology, but it is a pleasant sojourn into another world.

Furthermore, with the growth of HMO’s, we may all be searching for new opportunities.

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Functional Neuroanatomy: Text and Atlas. Edited by Adel K. Afifi and Ronald A. Bergman. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1998, $42. ISBN: 0-07-001589-9.

This soft-back text provides the principles of neuroanatomy ranging from neurohistology to gross topography of the central nervous system. There is a plethora of excellent illustrations. The book is written for students and has very little information about the enteric or visceral nervous systems.

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Hepatitis C Protocols. Edited by Johnson Yiu-Nam Lau, MD, Humana Press, Totowa, New Jersey, 1998, $99.50. ISBN: 0-896-03521-2.

This book is part of a series entitled Methods in Molecular Medicine dealing with current topics, such as HIV protocols, molecular diagnosis of infectious disease, molecular basis of genetic disease, etc. The text is written for the hepatitis C virologist.

The identification of Hepatitis C by Houghton and colleagues, nearly ten years ago, represented a technical "tour de force." The revolutionary concept of identifying a pathogen without actually visualizing or detecting it forever redefined the way we approached the pathogenesis of a disease whose cause is unknown. This book is a marriage of basic and clinical science, which focuses on fundamental aspects of the virus and areas for future research.

The text of 55 chapters, with 103 nationally and internationally recognized investigators is divided into nine parts. Part I deals with detection of anti-HCV in serum; II, detection and quantitation of HCV in serum; III, detection of HCV in liver-tissue; IV, HCV genotypes; V, detection of HCV in situ; VI, molecular biologic characterization; VII, HCV-specific immunologic response; VIII, in vitro culture models, and IX, construction of recombinant viral vectors for the expression of HCV genes.

With the use of molecular biology, immunology, and cell biology techniques, important information has been gathered on the virologic and immunologic aspects of HCV infection. This information provides the foundation for the development of new therapies. This current volume by many of the leading researchers in the field describes state-of-the-art methods and tools that are being used to address important medical and scientific questions.

There is an interesting, thorough, and lucid discussion of HCV-specific immunologic-responses by Marion Peters. It is unfortunate that the editors did not include more introductory and overview essays.

While this volume is loaded with information, it is directed toward the clinical scientist and investigator in hepatitis C and is probably of limited value for the gastroenterologist/hepatologist.

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