



PAEDIATRIC OSTEOLOGY. PREVENTION OF OSTEOPOROSIS — A PAEDIATRIC TASK?*

*Edited by E Schönau and V Matkovic. Pp. ix + 276.
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Over the last decade, research directed at preventing osteoporosis in the elderly has placed more emphasis on studies which aim to elucidate the factors which influence the achievement of peak bone mass in the young adult. The rationale for this shift is the fact that an improvement in peak bone mass in the young adult will delay the onset of osteoporosis and the development of minimal trauma fractures in the elderly.

Therefore, this book, which is a collection of lectures presented at the second Workshop on Paediatric Osteology held in Cologne in 1997, is timely and a welcome addition to the topic. The papers include among others, discussions on the biochemical markers of bone turnover, the use of bone densitometry in children, the measurement and role of muscle strength on bone development, the inter-relationships between puberty, genetics and nutrition and bone growth during childhood and adolescence, and bone mass changes associated with a number of chronic diseases, such as anorexia nervosa, malignancy, asthma, renal disease and growth hormone deficiency in childhood.

As is typical of books of this nature, the quality of individual contributions varies: some of the papers are state-of-the-art reviews, while others are individual research studies. As someone with a special interest in paediatric bone physiology and disease, I found the majority of the articles to be well written and of considerable interest. The book, however, is not going to be of particular relevance to the generalist, but rather to all paediatric endocrinologists, and adult physicians and gynaecologists interested in the management of osteoporosis. The price, when converted to rands (approximately R1 000), does place it outside the reach of those with a passing interest in the field, and it is for this reason that medical libraries should be encouraged to obtain a copy.

John M Pettifor

MOLECULAR AND CELL BIOLOGY OF TYPE 2 DIABETES AND ITS COMPLICATIONS

*Frontiers in Diabetes. Volume 14. Edited by F Belfiore, M Lorenzi,
GM Molinatatti and M Porta. Series Editor: F Belfiore. Pp. x + 260.
CHF112/DM134/US\$97.50 Karger. 1998. ISBN 3-8055-6644-1.*

This book consists of papers presented at the International Diabetes Conference on Molecular and Cell Biology of Type 2 Diabetes and its Complications held in Turin in April 1997. As a result, the book consists of 13 short review articles on aspects of diabetes, divided into 3 chapters, namely Insulin Secretion, Insulin Action and Mechanisms of Diabetic Complications. The second half of the book consists of a number of short communications from the aforementioned Congress, each one consisting of one to two pages.

The nature of the publication is such that none of the contributions present us with either an abstract or a summary and this makes rapid screening of its content extremely difficult. Furthermore, despite being loosely tied together under specific chapters, the contents of the articles vary widely, with many of them primarily related to molecular biology whilst others have a clinical bias. The subjects covered range from such esoteric topics as the '6-Phosphofructo-2Kinase/Fructose-2, 6-Bisphosphatase System' to 'Vascular Remodelling of Diabetic Retinopathy' and 'Microalbuminuria and Cardiovascular Risk'. As such, there is probably something in this book for everyone who has some interest in diabetes, ranging from the molecular biologist to the ophthalmologist and clinical diabetologist. On the other hand, the eclectic nature of the contents creates a problem. It is difficult to recommend it to any one speciality and no one specialist will find the majority of the contributions of interest as there are not enough subjects on any one aspect of the speciality. Furthermore, many of the contributions require at least a working knowledge of molecular biology and therefore would be of little interest to generalists. This is thus a book that will be of interest to a clinical diabetologist with a research interest in molecular biology, but cannot be widely recommended for those with a general, but non-specific, interest in diabetes.

Larry A Distiller

* This book is available directly from SAMA Health and Medical Publishing Book Department, Private Bag X1, Pinelands, 7430, tel. (021) 531-3081, fax (021) 531-4126, e-mail publishing@samedical.org or jstrydom@samedical.org