BOOK REVIEW

The IAL Textbook of Leprosy

The IAL Textbook of Leprosy (Second Edition) produced by the Indian Association of Leprologists is a well presented, high quality and up-to-date Textbook. It is probably the premier reference Textbook for leprosy clinicians providing a comprehensive coverage of the medical aspects of leprosy in 54 chapters arranged in 9 sections. It is presented in the context of India by mostly Indian experts but it is of international relevance; all the sections are of interest to a global readership although the sections on history and leprosy control are mainly of interest to readers in India. International issues of different approaches to leprosy control within different health systems are not addressed in any depth. The editors are to be congratulated for their efforts in collating this comprehensive range of chapters by recognised experts that make an outstanding and modern Textbook on leprosy.

The Textbook is an excellent textbook on clinical leprosy and each chapter is well referenced to allow the reader to explore the various topics in greater depth. The book is well illustrated with photographs, figures and graphs. The sections on basic scientific considerations and pathology, and clinical laboratory diagnosis are worthy of note in terms of their detail and coverage by acknowledged experts in their fields. This includes immunogenetics, immunology, bacteriology, and pathogenesis of nerve damage. The chapters on clinical diagnosis, neurological and dermatology presentation, laboratory and differential diagnosis provide a contemporary and helpful coverage of these topics. The physician with an interest in leprosy will find the chapters covering systematic involvement and complications of leprosy and their management particularly useful. Chemotherapy is described in terms of its evolution, current recommended regimens as well as relapse and drug resistance. There is a chapter on surgery in leprosy but orthopaedic and reconstructive surgeons will need to look elsewhere for a more detailed text on the subject.

The section on social issues covers more than just rehabilitation and includes psychosocial aspects, human rights, discrimination, stigma, migration and health promotion. The final section has a number of chapters by international experts who attempt to predict some of the future prospects for leprosy in terms of new treatments, long-term epidemiological scenarios and management of leprosy in low endemic settings.

I strongly recommend this new Textbook as the premier Reference Textbook for the clinician with an interest in leprosy. It is well presented and well referenced. The context of the book is India, but the Textbook of international relevance. Every Medical School and Teaching Hospital in India must have a copy in their library!