Advanced Techniques in Diagnostic Cellular Pathology

M. Hannon-Fletcher, P. Maxwell eds. Chichester: Wiley, 2009.
ISBN: 978-0-470-51597-6. £39.95. 214 pp.

In cellular pathology, a number of emerging technologies are meeting the needs of an ever-demanding clinical quest; namely how to target patient treatment more effectively.

As the title suggests, this book reviews a variety of advanced techniques in cellular pathology, providing examples of how they are being used within a clinical context. Topics include scanning systems, virtual histology programmes, liquid-based cytology, immunohistochemical methods and comparative genomic hybridisation.

The editors have collated chapters written by those working in these specialised areas. The reader is provided with a practical-based knowledge of these methods and the technical and interpretative problems which may occur during the procedures.

The text is well presented with short paragraphs and good illustrations. Each chapter has further referencing and web-based information. Supplementary materials are provided in the form of virtual microscopy slides (courtesy of i-Path Diagnostics).

Having an interest in the training of future biomedical scientists, I was pleased to see a text which gives a clear and concise introduction to these technologies. Clearly, the book has been written with students in mind, particularly those who may be undertaking postgraduate studies. However, the straightforward approach provides a very useful reference for those who are interested in reading about advances in cellular pathology.

At a cost of around £40, I feel this book would be a worthwhile resource for any cellular pathology laboratory. I would thoroughly recommend it to all cellular pathology laboratories.

C Whiteside

The Human Body. An Introduction for the Biomedical and Health Sciences

G Pocock, CD Richards. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
ISBN 9780199289073. £33.99. 816 pp.

This book aims to provide students of the healthcare sciences with a fundamental understanding of anatomy, physiology and pharmacology, and to emphasise, when appropriate, the clinical implications of the subject material.

The book is divided into six sections, 35 chapters in total, which take the reader from introductory chemistry, through the anatomy, physiology and pharmacology of individual systems (musculoskeletal, nervous system, cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal and reproductive) and ends with a consideration of the integrative aspects of these topics (e.g., energy balance and exercise and body fluid and acid base balance). Included in this final section is a consideration of the uptake, distribution and elimination of drugs. If I have a criticism of the book, it is that this important section may have been placed earlier in the text, supporting the pharmacology contained in other chapters.

Each chapter begins with a number of clear learning objectives. Divided into subsections, each chapter is clearly written and is accompanied by a profusion of coloured diagrams which support and extend the written word. Throughout the book, clinical and applied aspects of anatomy and physiology are introduced, including the use of drugs in the treatment of disease and disorder. To aid learning, key words and concepts appear as bold in the text, and throughout each chapter are a number of 'Key Points' boxes which summarise in a few sentences the content of each particular subsection of the chapter.

Each chapter concludes with a number of self-assessment questions, mainly true/false but also a number of quantitative problems. The answers to all problems are provided at the end of the book, together with a brief description of why a particular response was correct or incorrect. For those students who wish to extend their knowledge further, each chapter contains recommended further reading – conveniently divided into anatomy, physiology, pharmacology and medicine, as appropriate.

In conclusion, the book clearly achieves the aims set out by the authors and can be recommended to students on a range of courses in the healthcare sciences. It will provide them with a thorough understanding of normal human structure and function to underpin more specialist areas of study.

I Kay