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Book Review

Stockham SL, Scott MA: *Fundamentals of Veterinary Clinical Pathology*, 368 pp, Ames, IA, Iowa State Press, A Blackwell Publishing Company, 2001 (\$74.99).

This book, written primarily for the sophomore students of veterinary medicine, is a compendium of laboratory medicine *cum* pathophysiology. It is an important contribution to the teaching of laboratory medicine, and all medical laboratorians involved in education would be well advised to get a copy for their teaching files. In a somewhat abbreviated form, and by deleting the word veterinary from its title, it easily could be used in any medical school here and abroad.

The authors, who have been teaching clinical pathology for more than 20 years, apparently know not only which aspects of laboratory medicine are most important, but also know how to present them and how to tie and relate the new fact to the students' knowledge of other preclinical subjects. They also know how to make the topics clinically relevant. Clinical interpretation of the laboratory data is the major strength of the book. It contains numerous clinical scenarios that enliven the bare facts and numbers that often scare or repulse students from learning laboratory medicine. To show off that I have learned something important or interesting, let me give just two examples:

The major emphasis is on blood chemistry and hematology, but there are also chapters on the analysis of urine and endocrinology. I imagine that cerebrospinal fluid and other body fluids

are rarely examined in animals, and transfusions are rarely performed, because these topics are mentioned only in passing. Hematology is illustrated in color plates. Excellent line drawings are used to illustrate the pathophysiologic basis of important concepts and laboratory abnormalities. Even a person like me, who pleads ignorance when it comes to veterinary medicine, could profit from this text. To show off that I have learned something, here are a few interesting tidbits: Hypophosphatemia from hyperalimentation of starved dogs can reduce the survival of platelets in circulation and lead to thrombocytopenia. Cows that drink too much water can have hypoosmotic hemolysis. Horses that eat rhubarb (high on oxalates!) can develop hypocalcemia.

The book is primarily intended for sophomore students, and as such it reads almost like a collection of very detailed lecture notes. I mean this as a compliment and to indicate that the book is ideally suited for a well-organized course in laboratory medicine. I wish only that the students at our Medical School had such a course! The practicing veterinarians also could read it to refresh their knowledge of the basics, but also as a sourcebook for interpreting laboratory findings.

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