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Book Review

Brody JS: *The Lung: Molecular Basis of Disease*, 218 pp, Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders Company, 1998 (\$52).

In recent years, molecular biologic techniques have entered into the diagnostic clinical arena and are now powerful tools in the evaluation of neoplasms, infections, and genetic disorders, to name a few. Because of the rapid evolution and complexity of molecular biology, this area may seem intimidating to practicing physicians and students.

As the author states in the preface, the goal of this book is “to provide sufficient background to enable physicians and students to understand how molecular biology is now impacting on pulmonary practice and to be able to understand the coming advances.” This concisely written, well-illustrated book largely achieves this goal and is an understandable introduction to molecular biology.

The book is organized into 10 chapters followed by a glossary of basic terminology. Chap-

ter 1 reviews basic concepts of DNA and Southern, Northern, and Western blots. The subsequent chapters on tuberculosis, alveolar proteinosis, α_1 -antitrypsin, alveolar proteinosis, deficiency, cystic fibrosis, lung cancer, and AIDS are used to explain and illustrate basic molecular concepts and analysis such as polymerase chain reaction, DNA cloning, linkage analysis, oncogenes, and so forth.

Each chapter is clearly and concisely written and contains multiple tables and figures to make complex material very understandable. The bibliography for each chapter is relatively short but seems to contain a sufficient number of pertinent recent references. This text is well suited for students and practicing physicians (particularly pulmonologists) who desire a basic introduction to molecular biology.

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