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Book Review

Rubanyi GM (ed): *Angiogenesis in Health and Disease: Basic Mechanisms and Clinical Applications*, 552 pp, New York, Marcel Dekker, 2000 (\$195).

This monograph contains 33 chapters dealing with various aspects of angiogenesis, a very hot research topic for which, unfortunately, I have only peripheral vision. Nevertheless, I perused the book with interest, which allowed me to improve somewhat my understanding of this extremely complex but apparently crucial biologic phenomenon. Above all, it convinced me that books of this type serve a function in educating people who are not working a specific field of inquiry. As such, I recommend it as an addition to your general medical library.

Most of the chapters that I chose to read were well written and informative. The one that I liked the most was the introductory overview by I. Flamme on the molecular biology of vasculogenesis and early angiogenesis. I also learned

about various inhibitors and promoters of angiogenesis and the incredible amount of work done in experimental animals, or *in vitro*, as well as in clinical settings. The story of thalidomide, which made an astonishing comeback, is revealing in itself. At the same, however, it shows how fast books of this kind become outdated: while the book is quoting a 1998 news report about the "new breakthrough from Arkansas," by now we already know that thalidomide has been extensively tested in the treatment of human multiple myeloma.

Books of this type have a short half-life and rapidly become obsolete. Nevertheless, they serve a useful function and should be in major libraries for people who want to learn about a given topic from experts in the field.

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