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BOOK REVIEW

Clinical Genetics

Medical genetics

Ian D Young, Oxford Core Texts, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2005. 315pp. £22.
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In these last years, there has been a proliferation of new textbooks and of new editions of classical textbooks on medical genetics targeted at medical students. However, these books are all over 400 pages with increasingly complex explanations of new discoveries and concepts. Thus, there is a need, in the field, for a book with shorter length providing the basic information in a comprehensible and digestible manner. This new book, at just under 300 pages, from a long established author and teacher of medical genetics is reaching this goal.

The book comprises 14 chapters, each designed to be the subject of a single lecture. The chapter titles and contents are carefully chosen. The first two chapters on basic principles (gene structure and function and chromosomes and cell division) provide a logical, stepwise introduction to the 12 other chapters that are designed to provide the clinical knowledge and skills expected of a medical student, including common chromosomal disorders, Mendelian diseases, complex diseases, genes and populations, haemoglobinopathies, genes and development, cancer, inborn disorders of metabolism, genes, drugs and treatment, clinical skills and scenarios, and applied clinical genetics. In order to stimulate and sustain the reader's interest, a brief review of a relevant landmark publication is included in each chapter, together with a clinically or socially related vignette relating, for example, to Abraham Lincoln or to Dolly, the sheep. To assist those involved in the teaching of medical genetics, the core curriculum recommendations of the American and British Societies of Human Genetics are included as appendices.

The book is clearly written. Each topic is covered in a concise manner. The many diagrams are clear, carefully chosen, of high quality, and well presented. The figures, of an acceptable quality, are appropriate. At the end of each chapter, a selection of recommended reading is followed by multiple choice questions. A useful glossary of genetic terms is also available.

The reader can rapidly locate a single piece of information using the index.

This book offers medical students enjoyable and interesting access to the core medical genetics curriculum and shows the farsightedness of its author.

In summary, 'Medical genetics' presents as an usable and useful edition, a must have book for medical students and others who want to get a thorough insight into the complexity of genetics as applied to medicine■

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