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BOOK REVIEWS

What you always wanted to know about Huntington's disease

Questions and answers about HD

'Huntington's Disease' (second edition)
by Oliver Quarrell, thefacts series, Oxford University Press, 2008
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This book is an update of the first edition published in 1999 and results from the author's long experience with Huntington's disease (HD) in a clinical genetic context as well as from his close collaboration with HD association. Most chapters start with a number of key points and many of them are written in a question–answer format that is attractive for the reader. After an introductory chapter with 'Facts and figures about HD', chapter 2 'Physical features of HD' and chapter 3 'Behavioural and emotional aspects of HD' give a clear answer to important practical questions. Moreover, both chapters are well illustrated with many quotes, mainly from partners of patients, but also with a few case studies by professionals. The fourth chapter on juvenile HD does not only answer the questions 'Why use the term JHD? How frequent? Clinical features?' and many other questions, but also looks at the challenges for diagnosis from a parents' perspective as well as a doctor's perspective. 'The genetics of HD' in chapter 5 as well as 'Laboratory testing' in chapter 6 give a considerable amount of important information in a concise way and are well illustrated with clear figures. The glossary at the end of the book is also very useful. 'Genetic counselling for HD' is covered in two separate chapters: chapter 7 about the process involved in a new diagnosis in a family and chapter 8 paying more attention to unaffected family members and to the options for genetic testing that are available for them: predictive testing, prenatal testing and preimplantation genetic diagnosis. Owing to the difficulty of the topic, chapter 9 about 'Changes in the brain' and chapter 10 'What causes selective nerve cell damage?' are slightly less accessible than the previous chapters. Chapter 11 'Current research activities' stresses the importance of research networks as well as the importance of a close collaboration between the HD associations and the research community. The book ends with 'Useful resources and contacts' and information about HD associations in many countries all over the world.

Completely in line with the goal of the series 'thefacts' this book offers interesting and multifaceted information about HD in a clear and accessible manner. It can not only be recommended to families with HD but also to professionals who are involved in the care for HD patients■

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The genomic era and the new frontiers of medicine

Genomics and clinical medicine

Dhavendra Kumar, Sir David Weatheral
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In the past few years, progress in many fields, including biology, biological engineering, informatics and physics has led from genetics to a wider field, in which the totality of an organism's genes can be considered as a global system in which different components interact with each other and with external factors. The complete genome of *Homo sapiens* and many other eukaryotic and prokaryotic organisms has been sequenced and stored in public databases. Technological advances have led to many improvements already evident in the results that have been obtained over the past few years from different fields of biological research, such as the different associations between genes and diseases that have emerged from Genome Wide Association Studies.

We are experiencing a real genomics revolution. This is the rationale on which 'Genomics and Clinical Medicine' is based while taking the reader through a survey of the most recent discoveries in genomics and its applications to clinical medicine.

This is a 672 pages multi-author book to which a team of 69 experts from different fields of medical genetics have contributed