Book Review

Essential dermatology, venereology and leprosy

Maria C. Kuruvila
2005, Paras Medical Publisher
Pages 238, Price Rs. 275.00/-

There is a ‘rush’ of books on dermatology by Indian authors in recent years targeting undergraduate medical students and general practitioners. Maria Kuruvila Chacko’s book Essential Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology is another one in this line, yet different.

The book’s avowed focus is graduate medical students preparing for postgraduate entrance examinations. Some excellent MCQ’s at the end of each chapter indeed help students to do well in such examinations. This is one USP of the book. The text is written in a concise (too concise at times, if I may say so) and clear format and illustrated profusely with a large number of colour photographs (95 in all) and a few black and white ones to aid students to make the right diagnosis. Most reproductions are of excellent quality but some need replacement in future editions. The entire text is dotted with a wealth of information (indeed a surfeit of it, and in bold print) and no named dermatological sign, symptom or pathological change seems to have been left out. So much so that postgraduate students in dermatology may find it useful to give the book a quick ‘run over’ before they take a viva voce examination.

Even a book as meticulously prepared as this does not seem to escape Murphy’s laws.

One howler: “Parts of the epidermis in between the rete ridges are called dermal papillae (page 2, column 1, lines 4, 5)”. Typographical error, I suppose.

Another. “Amoxycillin is given in the dose of 2.5-5 mg per kg per day in 3 doses (page 18, column 2, lines 3, 4)”.

There could have been greater clarity presenting subjects like cutaneous tuberculosis and leprosy. Chapter titles like Connective tissue diseases (Chapter 17) and Disorders of connective tissue (Chapter 30) [a la ‘Rook’, but without the inverted commas] are bound to confuse the minds of the young readers. The former could have been called ‘Collagen vascular disorders’ as is generally accepted, if only for want of a better name.

Reasonably priced, nonetheless, the book is a good buy. Design, printing and paper quality are good and visually pleasing. All in all, an excellent effort.

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