BOOK REVIEW

Color Atlas of AIDS


The Color Atlas of AIDS was first published in 1989, and this second edition has been designed to incorporate the explosion of knowledge about HIV that has occurred in the interim. While the focus of this text is certainly pictorial, the contributors have supplemented the impressive array of photographs with a comprehensive explanation of disease processes.

The first of eight chapters by Charles Farthing provides a historical overview of the evolution of our knowledge about HIV and AIDS. It provides a perspective not commonly seen in such textbooks, which is both useful and interesting. The second chapter covers opportunistic infections in patients with HIV disease. It presents a useful overview; however, its utility is limited by a lack of tables and the fact that the figures are almost wholly derived from the Still Pictures Archive of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; this set of photographs is more than 10 years old.

The true strength of this book lies in chapters 3 and 4, which cover Kaposi’s sarcoma and cutaneous manifestations of HIV infection. The chapter on Kaposi’s sarcoma has more than 130 photographs and clearly differentiates in both text and photos the different clinical characteristics of the variants of Kaposi’s sarcoma, including the presentation of the disease in Africa as well as the developed world. While some attempt was made to describe the molecular biology of Kaposi’s sarcoma, this book was prepared before Kaposi’s sarcoma–associated herpesvirus/human herpesvirus 8 was identified.

The chapter on cutaneous manifestations covers diseases other than Kaposi’s sarcoma and includes both infectious and noninfectious complications of HIV infection. This chapter is also characterized by a wide variety of clear, descriptive photographs.

Chapter five focuses on oral manifestations of HIV infection and, while this chapter is short, it is clear and lucid. The same holds true for chapter seven, which describes the ocular complications of HIV disease. Chapter six provides a useful overview of the mucocutaneous manifestations of HIV infection in children. This chapter represents a very useful contribution to this somewhat overlooked subject; it provides a brief but succinct introduction to the natural history of HIV disease in children, followed by a broad description of its dermatologic manifestations.

The final chapter covers HIV infection in Africa, a chapter that seems somewhat out of place in this textbook. Much of the discussion focuses on Kaposi’s sarcoma and its manifestations in African patients, a subject quite well dealt with in chapter three. It also attempts to deal with the challenges of diagnosis and management of HIV infection in Africa; however, this overview is too sketchy to be useful for someone truly interested in the provision of care in that part of the world.

In sum, while this atlas has some weaknesses, it serves as an important addition to the library of any clinician treating patients with HIV infection. While the busy clinician would find the chapters on Kaposi’s sarcoma and dermatologic presentations most useful, the text also serves as an excellent introduction to the protean manifestations of HIV infection for one just entering the field.

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