Medical Management of Kidney Transplantation

Matthew R. Weir (Editor) Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, 561 pages, 2005.

Kidney was the first life-sustaining organ to be transplanted. This took place <60 years ago. Nevertheless, within this relatively short period, kidney transplantation, and all other organ transplantation, has become so increasingly complex that the concept of transplantology is no longer considered irrelevant. Therefore, in addition to a huge number of scientific journals reporting day to day progress in this new science, books are necessary to try and synthesize knowledge at any given time. Of course, when science progresses so fast, the reader will always be a few years behind the current status of knowledge.

This book, edited by an American professor of nephrology, aims not only to give, as stated in the preface, a compendium of the latest advances of this complex medical science, but also to reflect the personal interpretation of the authors on the available data. Intended mostly for the general practitioner, this latter requirement may appear superfluous. Personal interpretation is more intelligible for the specialist already having a more comprehensive approach to the topic under discussion. Transplant specialists, however, might request more recent updates.

It is composed of 35 chapters elaborated by well known health professionals, all involved in at least one of the various areas of transplant medicine. The contents are presented in chronological order regarding the transplant procedure, pre-, per- and post-transplantation. However, this is purely formal, as immunosuppression, for example, is placed in the (per-) transplantation section. Apart from this chronological presentation, chapters are without any clear logical order.

The majority of questions raised by transplant medicine are dealt with in this book and, consequently, chapters are of variable interest for the transplant specialist, who will find some topics less relevant, such as pharmacogenomics or new immunosuppressive agents. However, the general practitioner will find in this book ways to improve his management of this new category of patients, who are now more frequently managed in general medical practices. In this respect, one may regret the absence of chapters on lung, digestive or dermatological disorders observed in kidney transplant recipients. In contrast, the chapter on ‘Drug–Drug Interaction’ is of huge practical importance, and rarely found in transplantation books.

Finally, even if the content of the book, especially the first part, well reflects the practices and lines of thought which mainly prevail in the American Anglo-Saxon culture, and may not be of use in other parts of the world, the majority will be of great use to all general practitioners and young post-graduate doctors willing to serve in transplant medicine.

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