



## Book review

### Rabies

Alan C. Jackson, William H. Wunner (Eds.), *Academic Press, Elsevier Science, 2002, Price US\$ 129.95, ISBN 0-12-379077-8*

This excellent and timely book contains a well-balanced compilation of 15 chapters by leading experts on all aspects of research on rabies virus. Rabies remains one of the most important global public health problems worldwide, despite the fact that a vaccine against rabies was developed by Louis Pasteur before it was known that the disease is caused by a virus. This early work is elegantly reviewed in the opening chapter by medical historian Lise Wilkinson, who illustrates her chapter with many fascinating prints from the Wellcome Library in London. The next chapter brings our knowledge of rabies right up to the 21st century with a comprehensive description of the rabies virus by Bill Wunner. The next three chapters are all from the CDC, which continues to play a major role in rabies surveillance and control in the USA, where rabies is endemic in wildlife and most human cases now result from contact with infected bats. These authoritative chapters describe the molecular epidemiology (Jean Smith), epidemiology (James Childs), and rabies in animals (Mike Niezgod, Cathy Hanlon, and Charles Rupprecht). The following two chapters by Alan Jackson provide a thorough description of rabies disease in humans, and rabies pathogenesis. The pathology of rabies is described in detail by two Japanese pathologists from Miyagi National Hospital, Yuzo Iwasaki, and Muneshige Tobita. Next is an excellent chapter on rabies diagnosis from Charles Trimarchi and Jean Smith.

One of the characteristics of rabies infection is that by entering the central nervous system, the virus becomes invisible to the immune system, but the success of post-exposure prophylaxis by vaccination shows that the immune response can control virus infection. This subject is discussed by Monique Lafon of the Pasteur Institute, and is followed by an excellent chapter on rabies vaccines by Debbie Briggs, David Dreesen, and Bill Wunner. The public health management of humans at risk following exposure to rabies is then described in detail by Debbie Briggs, after which Konrad Bogel of WHO reviews strategies for the control of dog rabies, still a very significant problem in developing countries. The more general problem of rabies control in wildlife is reviewed by two Canadian scientists, David Johnston and Rowland Tinline, and the book concludes with an epilogue by Alan Jackson on Future Developments and Challenges for those working to control rabies, which emphasises the importance of co-operation between the human health and veterinary sectors of public health.

This volume, which is published more than a decade after George Baer's classic book on "The Natural History of Rabies", provides an up-to-date review of all aspects of rabies, and should be essential reading for all those interested in rabies and its control. It is highly recommended.

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