

Immunology: Clinical Case Studies and Disease Pathology.
Strober W. and Gottesman SRS (Eds). New Jersey; Wiley-Blackwell 2009.
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This title is a companion volume of “Immunology: a short course”. The editors and 29 contributors (2 from UK; 1 from Germany; rest from US) describe twenty-six case studies (10 in paediatric age group) of illnesses occurring because of deficits in normal immune function. Each case study is an account of a real patient suffering from one of the main types of immunological disorders. The reader is guided through symptoms, clinical and laboratory workup generating differential and final diagnosis. The patient’s subsequent course then follows describing how the disease evolves and response to treatment. Next comes a description of the immunological background to the patho-physiology, all illustrated with diagrams in colour. The case studies have been grouped into five units (Immunodeficiency disease; Immediate hypersensitivity and mast cell disorders; Autoimmunity disorders; Malignancies of the lymphoid system; Laboratory tests). The grouping provides a road map along which the reader moves to gain a grasp of the complexities of immune function. Each case study includes a discussion of normal immunological processes relevant to the disease under discussion, and compares it with what has gone wrong. An index of lessons in normal immunity provides a list of topics discussed in the book. Together with the references at the end of each chapter this will help the more enterprising reader to study topics in greater detail.

Immunologic disease of any type has its roots in genetics, varying from single gene mutations (e.g. congenital immunodeficiency diseases) to gene polymorphisms (e.g. autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis). These are described in detail as also are the functions of various cytokines. This creates a problem for the novice because of the large number of acronyms and abbreviations, particularly with understanding the figures. A glossary of terms would have greatly enhanced the usefulness of this otherwise excellent text.

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