

Book review:

G.A. Higgs, B. Henderson (eds): Novel cytokine inhibitors.

Birkhäuser Verlag AG, Basel, Berlin, Boston, 2000, 198 CHF, ISBN: 3-7643-5942-0

Cytokines have been recognized to play an important role as key mediators in numerous acute and chronic inflammatory diseases of quite different nature. These include, for example, bronchial asthma, dermatitis, multiple sclerosis, or acute cardiovascular failure (shock). Basically, cytokines can be considered as information transfer modules, i.e., they are embedded in feedback mechanisms and need receptors to fulfill their function. This textbook is aware of the general aspects of cytokines: It starts with chapters of targets for modulating cytokine responses, cellular signaling, regulation of cytokine production. Chapters of oligonucleotide-based drugs, cytokine-inhibiting enzymes, blockade of cytokines follow. Finally, specific cytokines such as Interleukin-1, TGF- β , and inhibitors of p38 mitogen-activated protein kinase are discussed. The textbook gives an overview on the basic molecular pathways. Specific clinical aspects are included; thus, clinicians can deduct their clinical experience from basic biochemical and biological pathways. This is the strength of the textbook: a fast and representative knowledge can be deducted in terms of understanding cytokines and their function under normal and abnormal conditions.

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