

Book Review

Grading Key

★★★★★=*outstanding*; ★★★★=*excellent*;
★★★=*good*; ★★=*fair*; ★=*poor*.

The Epididymis: From Molecules to Clinical Practice: A Comprehensive Survey of the Efferent Ducts, the Epididymis and Vas Deferens, edited by Bernard Robaire and Barry T. Hinton, 575 pp., with author and subject indices, New York, NY: Kluwer Academic and Plenum Publishers; 2002. ISBN 0-306-46684-8.

Type of Book: As the title implies, this review book covers virtually all basic and clinical aspects of the structure and function of the epididymis, efferent ducts, and vas deferens. It is a multiauthored review text with chapters written by both clinical and basic scientists. Figures and photographs are reproduced in black and white.

Scope of Book: Comprehensive! This book contains 33 chapters, covering all of the expected subjects such as function of the epithelium, hormonal regulation, sperm maturation, toxicology, and clinical implications of vasectomy. However, it also contains chapters on topics that have enjoyed less visibility recently, such as autonomic innervation of the epididymis, novel technologies in excurrent duct research, and epididymal cancer. The book begins with an insightful chapter on historical developments in the study of this part of the reproductive tract.

Contents: Section topics of this book include the following: The Epithelium of the Excurrent Duct System, Development and Aging, Hormonal Regulation and Effects of Toxicants, Changes in Spermatozoa During Epididymal Transit, Novel Technological Approaches, and Clinical Con-

siderations. The Introductory section contains chapters on historical perspectives, evolution of the epididymis, and innervation and vasculature of the excurrent duct system.

Strengths: The strength of this book is clearly in the comprehensive coverage of the subject. In addition, most of the chapters are very up to date in their review of their topic. Although virtually all of the lead or senior authors on these chapters have well-established research areas, most have taken care not to overemphasize their own area of research and have given the reader an even-handed review of the topic area.

Deficiencies: Although not strictly a deficiency, this book does suffer the unavoidable fault of many multiauthored books, and that is redundancy. Since many chapters cover related topics, there is some overlap in coverage. This makes the book longer than necessary for those who choose to sit down and read it cover to cover, but at the same time, it provides appropriate coverage in any given chapter for those using the text for reference and reading selected chapters only.

Recommended Readership: This text will provide an excellent foundation for students new to this area of the reproductive tract and will serve as an excellent reference resource for those already working in the field.

Overall Grading: ★★★★★

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