



Book Review

Gary J. Schiller. *Chronic Leukemias and Lymphomas: Biology, Pathophysiology, and Clinical Management*. Totowa, NJ: Humana Press Inc; 2003. 342 pages. Hardcover, \$135.00 US.

This 342-page hardcover monograph is presented in a friendly A5 format and is an excellent publication.

The book is divided into 12 chapters and includes 42 tables and 25 black-and-white figures. Most of the chapters are written by authors who have made major contributions to the specific field of hematological malignancies. Many of the authors are affiliated with the University of California at Los Angeles. The layout is traditional, with most chapters describing a single disease entity. The Table of Contents is well organized, the Index is easy to follow, and the paper quality is good.

The editor has chosen a difficult task — integrating a diverse group of indolent lymphoproliferative and myeloproliferative disorders in a small-size monograph and summarizing the biology, clinical manifestations, and therapeutic management of these conditions, including the recently introduced molecular-targeted therapy.

Chapter 1 reviews the history, epidemiology, and risk factors of chronic leukemias. The next three chapters on chronic lymphocytic leukemia, hairy cell leukemia, and prolymphocytic leukemia form a logic complex of related lymphoproliferative conditions. The effective use of tables and figures helps to clarify the information in the text. Despite being printed in black and white, high-power-field figures are of good quality.

Chapter 5 is a well-organized, comprehensive review of chronic myeloid leukemia (CML). This chapter also contains a discussion on the recent success with novel molecular-targeted therapy with imatinib mesylate. Despite the fact that monograph was scheduled to be issued in 2003, it was probably too late to include the results from the IRIS trial published in 2002, which led to the Food and Drug Administration's approval of imatinib mesylate as first-line therapy for patients in chronic phase of CML.

Chapters 6 and 7 address rare conditions such as Sézary syndrome and large granular lymphocyte lymphoproliferative disorders.

Space devoted to these two conditions is unconventionally larger than space allocated to more common conditions such as non-Hodgkin's lymphomas. Nevertheless, the authors provide a comprehensive review on these conditions, which are often not discussed even in larger textbooks of hematology.

Chapter 8 addresses myeloproliferative disorders (MPDs) and lists multiple rare conditions in this category, but discussion is focused on only three common disorders: polycythemia vera, essential thrombocythemia, and myeloid metaplasia with myelofibrosis. The exception is chronic myelomonocytic leukemia (CMML), which is listed among overlap (myelodysplastic/myeloproliferative) disorders as recommended by recently published WHO classification of the myeloid neoplasm. I have two critical comments regarding Table 1 of this chapter. First, primary familial polycythemia should not be included in the category of MPDs. The biological behavior of this condition significantly differs from a group of MPDs. Patients with primary familial polycythemia do not progress into acute leukemia, and they do not develop secondary myelofibrosis during their course of disease as often seen in polycythemia vera and other MPDs. In a minority of families, mutations of erythropoietin receptor were found to be a causative molecular defect. The use of myelosuppressive therapy in these patients should be avoided. Second, a minor technical comment deals with terminology of myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) used in the same table. The separation of CMML from MDS based on a new WHO classification of the myeloid neoplasm is accompanied with an old French-American-British (FAB) classification system for MDS.

Chapter 9 provides an excellent, concise summary of the most recent laboratory and clinical discoveries in the biology and treatment of multiple myeloma, the second most common hematological malignancy. The addition of tables and figures would clarify this valuable text and make it more useful in clinical practice.

Chapters 10, 11, and 12 concentrate on low-grade lymphomas, aggressive large-cell lymphomas, and Hodgkin's disease, respectively. These last three chapters form an excellent integrated complex. All have

been written by leaders in the field who were able to analyze and summarize the bulk of the relevant literature with derivation of practical guidelines for management of these disorders.

In most instances, each chapter of this monograph is followed by a list of current and pertinent references. The editor should be praised for keeping the book concise without long and redundant descriptive paragraphs.

In summary, this monograph achieved most of the goals postulated by the editor. Strengths of this book include clear language, up-to date information, a critical appraisal of recent clinical trials, and practical comments on the use of new targeted therapy. The authors demonstrate their comprehensive understanding of the basic biology and therapeutic management of conditions they describe. Their approach is especially suitable for practicing hematologists/oncologists who are looking for the latest concise reviews of specific hematological disorders with practical guidelines on therapy. Hematology/oncology trainees will also benefit from reading this monograph.

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