**BOOK REVIEWS**

Gary P. Wormser, Section Editor

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**HIV and Liver Disease**

Edited by Kenneth E. Sherman


The book *HIV and Liver Disease* (edited by Kenneth E. Sherman) is a collection derived from conferences held during 2006–2010 under the auspices of the National Institutes of Health. There are 22 chapters, each addressing a different topic regarding the association between human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and liver disease. Topics include the epidemiology, pathology, assessment, and mechanisms of HIV-related liver disease, viral hepatitis, fatty liver, alcoholic liver disease, antiretroviral toxicity, and management of end-stage liver disease. The editor states that the goal of the book is to describe the state of the field, identify gaps in knowledge, and provide insight into how these deficiencies might be addressed. He envisions his readers as clinicians managing HIV-infected patients with liver disease, researchers keeping current with the subject, or medical students seeking an introduction to the topic.

Liver disease now is one of the leading causes of HIV-related mortality in the developed world, so the subject certainly is worthy of study. The editor deserves kudos for addressing such a timely and complex topic. The contributing authors include a number of respected scholars, including Judith Aberg, Judith Feinberg, Vincent Soriano, and Mark Sulkowski. The chapters are well-referenced and indexed. The book is admirable in that it devotes full chapters to substance abuse, quality of life, and racial disparity. There are many color illustrations and tables. Again, credit goes to the editor; each chapter is complete, yet there rarely is duplicate coverage of any topic.

As is the case with all multiauthored books, some chapters are better than others. Some chapters are concise, whereas others are exhaustive. Some chapters are dauntingly technical, but this is inherent to the book’s goal of serving scientists as well as clinicians. Several chapters give background information that may be unnecessarily basic or overly detailed for the typical reader or simply unrelated to the topic at hand. There are many abbreviations but no glossary. Several chapters contain outdated treatment information, but that seems impossible to avoid in printed medical textbooks today. Clinical topics such as hepatitis C, steatohepatitis, hepatocellular carcinoma, and hyperbilirubinemia either have insufficient detail for treatment and management purposes or the information is scattered among multiple chapters. The chapters regarding each type of viral hepatitis (A, B, C, D, E) are not sequential. Recommendations (eg, whether to check alpha-fetoprotein in cirrhotic patients) differ between chapters. Although the book might assist in patient care, clinicians would need to obtain additional information from other sources.

Highlights include the excellent summary at the conclusion of chapter 5 regarding noninvasive markers of liver injury. Chapter 12 on the natural history of hepatitis B virus (HBV) has an interesting discussion regarding the interpretation of isolated anti-HBV core antibody. Chapter 17 on the prevention of hepatitis infection is a gem—upbeat, complete, and directive. In contrast, chapter 4 on the pathology of HIV-associated liver disease does not review the various histologic scoring systems for chronic liver disease (eg, Ishak and Metavir). Because user knowledge of the systems is necessary to treat hepatitis C virus and the next chapter refers to the Ishak fibrosis score, this omission is problematic. Also, although the chapter has good color photographs of pathology slides, there are no arrows to assist the nonpathologist.

The book is successful in providing an overview of liver disease in the context of HIV infection; it could be useful as part of a medical library or for selected physicians with a special interest in hepatology and HIV for contemplation, reference, and teaching purposes. It is not suitable as a handbook for treatment for the reasons described in the paragraphs above. However, given the rapid pace of changes in the field of HIV and liver disease, it is questionable whether a textbook (as opposed to an online information service) could ever serve that purpose.

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**Potential conflicts of interest.** Author certifies no potential conflicts of interest.

The author has submitted the ICMJE Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest. Conflicts that the editors consider relevant to the content of the manuscript have been disclosed.

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