

Nutrition, Gut Microbiota and Immunity: Therapeutic Targets for IBD

Editors: James D. Lewis, Frank M. Ruemmele and Gary D. Wu

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This book comprises a collection of summaries corresponding to talks given at the 79th Nestle Nutrition Institute Workshop, in essence is a series of short review articles- thirteen in all. The overarching theme is treatment of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) beyond conventional immunosuppression. The book addresses dietary treatments, antibiotics, prebiotics, probiotics and fecal transplantation within eight summaries in the second section “Manipulating the Gut Microbiome as a Therapy for IBD” and precedes this with five summaries giving an overview of pathogenesis.

The pathogenesis section is a nice addition to the text but is likely native to the target audience already. Amongst the summaries here, one is particularly worth singling out: “Current Issues in the Design of Clinical Trials in IBD” by Brian G. Feagan. I found this section to be a refreshing, insightful description of the evolution of randomized control trials in IBD and the challenges therein. I wasn’t sure this sat within the broader narrative of the text, focusing as it did more on drug trials, but as a standalone piece it was excellent.

Section two devotes five summaries to diet, with Gary D. Wu’s “Diet, the Gut Microbiome and the Metabolome in IBD” presenting an overview of the Western diet and its impact on microbiota, particularly the active metabolic component- the metabolome. This summary pointed succinctly at how much we still don’t understand about diet/microbial interplay.

Three full summaries are devoted to exclusive enteral nutrition (EEN) in Crohn’s disease, and as a pediatric gastroenterologist who uses this therapy routinely; it was nice to see it afforded such coverage. Of the three summaries on EEN, Arie Levine’s “Exclusive Enteral Nutrition: Clues to the Pathogenesis of Crohn’s Disease” stood out with some hypotheses about how diet may modulate Crohn’s-type inflammation. The EEN summaries presented in this book present an excellent platform for more adult uptake of this therapy and hopefully future research.

The final summary that I will draw attention to is “Fecal Microiota Transplantation: An Interest in IBD?” by Stacy A. Kahn and colleagues. I think it would be

fair to describe this as a “hot topic” in IBD practice, and the proliferation of “do-it-yourself” videos mean I’m increasingly asked about this in clinic. I therefore found it helpful to read a comprehensive overview from one of the leading proponent centers for this therapy. This summary presents the (limited) evidence base in IBD, a helpful donor screening checklist, then outlines many of the challenges to be overcome in a fecal transplant program. This summary to me was the highlight of the book and will immediately inform my clinical practice.

I found this book to be an entertaining and enlightening overview of an exciting and emerging area in clinical IBD practice and would commend it to others. Certain sections would be of particular utility as dip-in overviews for trainees keen to update themselves on less familiar aspects of IBD pathogenesis and therapeutic research. Overall, the editors have done an outstanding job in distilling a complex topic into a manageable format.

Richard Hansen MBChB, PhD, FRCPCH
Department of Paediatric Gastroenterology,
Hepatology and Nutrition
Royal Hospital for Sick Children
Glasgow, Scotland

John Pohl, M.D., Book Editor, is on the Editorial Board of *Practical Gastroenterology*



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