Current Topics in Pain: 12th World Congress on Pain

**José Castro-Lopes. IASP Press, Seattle, 2009. \$24.08 Can. 336 pages.
ISBN-10: 0931092760; ISBN-13: 978-0931092763**

Brenda Lau, MD

Published online: 24 July 2010
© Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society 2010

Current Topics in Pain: 12th World Congress on Pain is not a traditional proceedings book. Instead, it is a focused book of essays that summarize the areas of expertise and accomplishments of the renowned experts who were invited to give a plenary or distinguished lecture at the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) 12th World Congress on Pain held in Glasgow, Scotland in August 2008.

The IASP is the leading interdisciplinary professional forum for scientific research, practice, and education in the field of pain. The biennial World Congress on Pain is the world's largest multidisciplinary conference where the most significant advances in the understanding of pain and pain management are shared. In the past, key topics presented at previous World Congresses on Pain were summarized in larger proceedings books detailing key review articles, reports, poster presentations, and workshops. However, this book differs in its approach as only the 15 scientific plenary talks and the two distinguished lectures presented at the 12th World Congress are summarized.

Rather than comprising in-depth evaluations of individual scientific studies, this book includes individual essays that offer insights learned from the current body of

knowledge related to the various topics discussed and generate hypotheses for future exploration. Each essay is appropriately illustrated with figures and tables and incorporates a comprehensive bibliography for more detailed reading.

Most of the essays discuss the current understanding of the neurobiology, neurochemistry, and genetics of pain mechanisms, especially pertaining to persistent pain. However, there are also several essays highlighting topics of economic, political, and ethical significance beyond the field of pain that ultimately impact current and future acute and chronic pain management approaches and resources internationally. These essays include discussions on pain in the developing world, pain and suffering following torture, the external validity of clinical trials, and practical steps to implement quality improvement programs in pediatric pain and palliative care.

This is an excellent book for researchers, clinicians, and members of the general medical community to review the wide range of developments at the vanguard of pain mechanisms and pain management. It also serves as foundational knowledge for the plenary topics presented at the 13th World Congress on Pain that took place in Montreal on August 30 to September 2, 2010.

B. Lau, MD (✉)
St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, BC, Canada
e-mail: drbrendalau@gmail.com