

Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease (2001) M. T. Johnstone and A. Veves (eds.) Humana Press, Totowa, pp. 464. ISBN 089603755X. EUR 138.40

The book *Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease*, edited by Michael T. Johnstone and Aristidis Veves, (Humana Press/contemporary cardiology; Totowa, New Jersey, 2001) provides a broad overview of the topic. In a total of 24 chapters or 458 pages, a prominent panel of contributors gives a comprehensive review of clinical as well as pathophysiological aspects of diabetic cardiovascular disease.

The first part covers pathophysiology and reviews the basic mechanisms of diabetes-associated cardiovascular disease. Profound insights are given in the pathophysiology of the metabolic syndrome and its impact on the cardiovascular system. Excellent reviews present the current state of knowledge on the multifaceted endothelial dysfunction in diabetes mellitus as well as the role of advanced glycation end products and of haemochemical changes in the development of diabetic cardiovascular disease. Moreover, the potential mechanisms of angiotensin II/insulin interaction in vascular smooth muscle cell and in the interrelationship between diabetes mellitus and hypertension, dyslipidaemia, thrombosis and atherosclerosis are also thoroughly discussed.

The second part focuses on the heart and on the epidemiological, clinical and therapeutic aspect of diabetes-associated coronary heart disease and myocardial failure as well as the

preoperative and perioperative management of the diabetic patient.

The third section considers the peripheral vascular system. It addresses epidemiological and pathophysiological aspects and also various methods of assessing and treating peripheral vascular disease associated with diabetes.

Finally, the part on microcirculation yields a detailed survey on pathophysiology, clinical features and treatment of diabetic retinopathy and nephropathy. Moreover, vascular changes associated with diabetic neuropathy and structural and functional disturbances of the microcirculation of the diabetic foot as well as methods of evaluating the microcirculation of the feet are comprehensively discussed.

Numerous vivid, schematic illustrations of pathophysiological interrelationships as well as representative figures from original research and a well selected and full literature citation are given in each chapter.

Thus the book could serve as a clinical textbook as well as a source and stimulus for further research in the field of diabetes associated cardiovascular disease. It addresses the needs of general physicians, specialists and medical students.

S. Gasic

AKH Vienna, University Clinic for Internal Medicine III,
Clinical Department for Endocrinology and Metabolism,
Währinger Gürtel 18–20, 1090 Vienna, Austria

D. Gugliano, M. Sedge and J. Sepe: The Mediterranean diet: Origins and myths. 266 pp, 365 pictures, Napoli, Idelson-Gnocchi, Edizioni Scientifiche, 2000. ISBN 19286 49114. EUR 88.40

This book is the result of the co-operation of a Professor of Metabolism (D. Gugliano), one of Life Sciences (J. Sepe) and a professional journalist (M. Sedge), who all have a fable on Mediterranean food. The outcome is a cultural and aesthetic delight for the connoisseur.

Scientifically the authors worry about the rise in life expectancy paralleled by an increase in degenerative diseases in the western world. Convinced that Mediterranean food would help to fend off some of these clouds they go back to the roots. The documentation starts in Crete, whose frugality in meat consumption with 78% of the fat consumed being from olives and olive oil, is the basis for the excellent health of the people living there. Ancient sources – archaeology, art and literature – provide a wide picture of food traditions starting before the 4th century B. C. in that area.

Nine chapters then describe dishes in ancient Egypt, at the Phoenician table as well as dining with Greek gods or at a Christian agape, shown by a picture taken from the cemetery of St. Peter and Marcellino, Rome (4th century A. D.). Ban-

quets are illustrated by pictures of red-figured Greek vases and terracotta figures or by an Apulian fish plate. Excursions to Etruscan and Roman feasts follow with paintings of a banquet scene in the Leopard's tomb of Tarquinia (5th century B. C.) and with mosaics of marine animals from the Casa del Faniero of Pompeii. The text also pays attention to the delights of grapevine and the ancient cult of exercise, the palaestra and games. It is the authors' intent to demonstrate the cultural continuity of what today is described a Mediterranean diet and life style in many countries in that area. The underpinning of history and the well selected and beautiful illustrations of the book make even the last chapters palatable, which discuss among other things antioxidants and nutraceuticals. Given the scope of the book almost anyone with an interest in the history of food will find it intriguing. I recommend to enjoy the first nine out of twelve chapters discussing the cultural roots of a delicious cuisine. *The Food Pyramid* (chapter 10) and a *Word from Science* (chapter 11) are somewhat misplaced and would better fit a textbook of nutrition.

W. Waldhäusl

Vienna, Austria

B. M. Hausen et al.: Die Inseln des Paul Langerhans. Eine Biographie in Bildern und Dokumenten (1988) Ueberreuter Wissenschaft, Wien, Berlin, pp. 267. ISBN 3-8000-3306-2. EUR 20.00

Paul Langerhans is a physician who gave his name to the endocrine islets of the pancreas and to dendritic cells in the epidermis. He was the first who described these histological entities in the middle of the 19th century. In the following time it need-

ed decades to fully understand the importance of the observations of Paul Langerhans. The description of the islets of Langerhans as distinct cell formations within the exocrine pancreas had far reaching consequences and finally lead to the discovery of insulin.

“Die Inseln des Paul Langerhans” is the only biography of Paul Langerhans published so far. Using original correspondence between Paul Langerhans and his relatives, friends and colleagues, supplemented by the theses of Langerhans, in

which he described the islets in the pancreas, as well as using excerpts of his original articles, the author draws a very detailed picture of an enthusiastic natural scientist. After a short description of his family and childhood, the following chapters are fully dedicated to the scientific career of Paul Langerhans which started with his inscription in the medical faculty of the University of Jena and had its first highlights with the works on the histological structures for which Langerhans is known today. Soon after his appointment as full professor at the university of Freiburg, Langerhans began to suffer from tuberculosis. Using again an impressive number of private documents, including photographs of the residences and environment of Langerhans, Hausen tracks the tragic last years of Langerhans' life until his death in Madeira. The author clearly shows, that Langerhans, despite his severe illness, never stopped his studies, ranging from case reports of patients suffering from tuber-

culosis to histological examinations of the maritime fauna. In the concluding part of the book, the author stresses the importance of Langerhans' observations by listing the scientific progress made based on his discoveries.

"Die Inseln des Paul Langerhans" represents a very interesting biography of one of the most undervalued researchers of his time. Although the book is written in German, it could be of interest to many readers, as it contains many historical documents and pictures reporting episodes in the life of Paul Langerhans. The detailed description of Langerhans life stresses his full dedication to the natural sciences and makes Langerhans a brilliant example for researchers of every status.

W. Gartner
Vienna, Austria