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# Pruritus



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Laurent Misery • Sonja Ständer  
Editors

# Pruritus

Second Edition

 Springer

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## Preface

Pruritus or itch is an unpleasant sensation that leads to the need to scratch, and this definition has remained unchanged for more than 350 years [1, 2]. However, pruritus as a protection mechanism will exist as long as animals and human beings have skin or fur. Acute and chronic pruritus are also common manifestations of dermatologic and non-dermatologic diseases. Recent epidemiological studies have revealed that chronic itch is very frequent (in almost one third of the population) [3].

All patients suffering from itch know that it is a very disturbing sensation with a high impact on the quality of life. However, this major symptom was considered the “little brother” and not severe by comparison to pain until the beginning of the 1990s. The consequences of this paradigm were that research on this field was hindered and development of effective antipruritic drugs delayed.

Fortunately, new concepts and genuine discoveries of itch have completely modified our understanding of itch and suggested new therapeutic modalities. International collaboration is now really effective, with the creation of the first Society dedicated to pruritus research: the International Forum for Studies on Itch (IFSI) – [www.itchforum.net](http://www.itchforum.net).

Nowadays, the research on itch is very dynamic and the speed between new discoveries is growing. This is why we are pleased to propose this second edition of our book. As previously, our objectives were to provide a book on itch that would be convenient for doctors who are confronted by patients suffering from itch, by giving practical data on the causes and treatments of pruritus and to present all the new data about pathophysiology and therapeutics.

This book could not have been completed without experts and friends worldwide; therefore, we want to thank all the authors who have contributed to this book.

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