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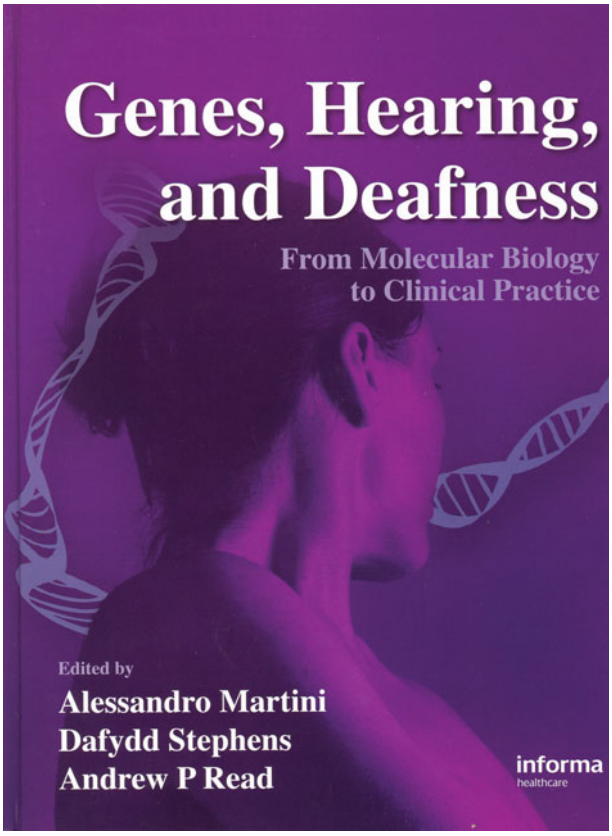
Book Review

GENES, HEARING, AND DEAFNESS. FROM MOLECULAR BIOLOGY TO CLINICAL PRACTICE

A Martini, D Stephens, A P Read, eds
Taylor and Francis, 2007
ISBN 10 0415383595 pp 328 Price £99



As an ENT surgeon with special interest in the genetics of hearing loss, I found this book on genetically related hearing loss fascinating. It presents an up-to-date review of genetically related hearing impairment, from molecular biology to everyday clinical practice.

The editors have presented the work in a format that is simple and very easy to read. The reader does not need to have a sound knowledge of molecular biology or genetics in order to comprehend the book's contents. The layout of the chapters is excellent. Although individual chapters are written by different authors, there is minimal overlap. The book begins with a detailed explanation of the basic genetic concepts, inheritance patterns and gene identification techniques, along with basic concepts of audiology. The commonest syndromes associated with hearing loss are described in a simple, concise and methodical manner, accompanied by appropriate illustrations, prior to moving to non-syndromic hearing problems. Age-related hearing impairment is comprehensively covered, with reference to genetic and environmental factors. Important and clinically common problems, such as noise-induced injury, otosclerosis and tinnitus, are described. Appropriate emphasis is given to the psychological aspects associated with deafness, in addition to counselling the patient and the family with regards to genetic risk.

Systematic descriptions of the detection and assessment of genetic childhood hearing impairment, and of diagnosis and management strategies in ear anomalies, are provided with reasonable detail.

The book's presentation of treatment modalities and therapeutic and preventative strategies for common hearing problems is particularly useful. The book also discusses implications for the future, including recent advances in treatment, such as the use of stem cell biotechnology, although some of these remain in the preliminary stages of research.

Overall, this is an excellent book which I would certainly recommend to any otolaryngologist, geneticist or audiologist, as well as to any other allied health professional who is involved with or has a special interest in deafness. The generalist may find this book a little detailed, but individual chapters and sections can be read without loss of coherence, making the book a potentially valuable reference. Potential readers would include those ready to undertake the specialty exit exam.

I feel that this excellent piece of work should be in every ENT and audiology department library. It certainly is in mine!

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