
The techniques and ethics of in vitro fertilization (IVF) have been the subject of much debate and scientific study since Steptoe and Edwards reported their first successful delivery of a live healthy female infant in 1978 utilizing the technique. Several hundred babies world wide have now been delivered following IVF procedures. The techniques have their genesis in the basic sciences and it is fitting that the authors acknowledge this by the extent of these chapters in the text. These give the reader a clear understanding of the mechanisms involved in producing mature, viable, fertilizable oocytes and the difficulties encountered in the assessment of human embryos and establishment of implantation.

The third section reviews some of the practical aspects involved with selection of patients for treatment and problems encountered during oocyte collection and embryo transfer. This book is not a practical manual for those wishing to set up an IVF treatment service but is a text to be read by anyone involved in this field to provide a broad and well balanced background. The book cannot be held to be comprehensive but in an area of medicine so rapidly developing this can only be expected. This book has many attributes and should be of interest to scientists, clinicians and students in the understanding of a critical new technology in human reproductive medicine.

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The authors and the publishers are to be complimented for introducing this new Manual series of which this is the first. It provides for the young clinician a convenient source of reference, clearly laid out and problem orientated. The ‘telegraphic style’ was intended to make it particularly ‘usable’.

In just over 150 pages, the subject is extremely well covered and the information it provides is precise, with good sound, useful factual information, such as the prevalence of certain conditions. I particularly liked the awareness of developing countries, and putting the relevance of acute diarrhoeas in perspective (p.24) ‘Reduction in mortality from this cause is the major programme for WHO for the 1980s’.

Intestinal and abdominal disorders in children can often be complex and difficult to evaluate and manage. This book provides up to date information on what is and is not known. The schemes for management and investigation are particularly helpful and comprehensive. In a book of this size, it is helpful that even rare conditions such as Crohn’s disease are included.
In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer

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