

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **Pemphigus Vulgaris: Autoimmune Bullous Disease**

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Pemphigus Vulgaris (PV) is the most frequent and severe form of pemphigus and before the era of glucocorticoids, it was almost always a fatal disease. In Slovakia, this issue has been the subject of interest of Professor Danka Švecová, M.D., PhD. from the Dermatology Clinic of Comenius University Faculty of Medicine in Bratislava, Slovakia, for many years. Her profound knowledge and experience enabled her to write the monograph devoted to this rare, but very severe disease. The monograph consists of 4 chapters, followed by a list of references and key words.

The 1<sup>st</sup> chapter is devoted to the pathogenesis of the disease. It is relatively extensive, comprising 56 pages. The author defines *pemphigus vulgaris* as an autoimmunity disorder and presents the facts supporting this conclusion. She describes the genetic determination of PV, autoantigens that are the targets of immune response, characterizes autoantibodies and discusses possible triggers of autoimmune processes. PV, similar to other autoimmune diseases, develops only in those who inherited a genetic predisposition to its development. This topic is the subject of great interest to her; especially the association between PV and HLA alleles, as she herself actively participated in this field of research.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter is devoted to establishment of the diagnosis, especially to histopathology. She presents her own results documented by images of her own origin.

Clinical manifestations of the disease are dealt with in the third chapter. Their description is based also on her own experience, which is documented by her own color images, which are very illustrative. Moreover, she acquaints a reader with a novel score system (ABSIS and PDAI).

The last chapter deals with the treatment of PV. It is also relatively extensive with 27 pages, due to how the treatment of PV is really uncertain. Prof. Švecová describes individual medicaments used in clinical practice and deals with their mechanisms of action, efficacy and adverse effects. She analyzes both conventional therapy and current biological treatment. The description of the treatment is based not only on a general knowledge and recommended guidelines, but also on her own experience she obtained during her many years of clinical practice.

The reviewer underlines that the particular information the author writes is truly based on the current level of our knowledge and is supported by relevant references. Several citations of her own papers on the topic or those of her colleagues with whom she collaborated prove her clinical and scientific eruditions. The monograph is written in English in an excellent and comprehensible style.

At the very end of the book there is a respectable list of 631 references, proof again of her excellent overview of the topic she deals with. A list of key words giving readers a better orientation in the book is also found here.

The monograph is intended chiefly for physicians – specialists in dermatology, and for clinical immunologists, who will find here not only information required for their daily clinical or research practice, but also inspiration for further interest in the field. The book may also help PhD students as a valuable source of knowledge and references.

I wish the book a good start to its life and much success, as this would certainly motivate Prof. Švecová to prepare a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in the years to come.

**Prof. Milan Buc, M.D., DSc.**

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