

Book review:

A. Bikfalvi (edt): Encyclopic reference of vascular biology and pathology.
Springer, New York, Berlin, 2000, 349 DM, ISBN: 3-540-65289-2

The “encyclopic references” is a new concept of the Springer Publishing Company which can be considered to be a “mixture” between a textbook and a comprehensive data base. The aim of the new design of information transfer in life sciences is to provide the reader with a fast access and detailed information of the latest research data. The retrieval of information is provided by an alphabetically order of “keywords” and “headings”. Within these alphabetically ordered chapters and “sub-chapters” specific aspects of the problem under discussion are given, for example: definition, characteristics, clinical significance and therapeutic implication. The information itself is presented in a free text version including drawings, images, and a list of references. This arrangement permits a problem-oriented reading. The reader immediately finds the important part of the textbook related to his specific problem, and has not to pass an index. The presented information is detailed. It includes biochemical, molecular biological, genetic, and clinical aspects. The amount of given different information forces the reader to specifically read “ordinary textbooks” in case he is not an expert of the discussed problem. The authors (and the whole series) offer all information in a “parallel” manner, i.e., aspects of “ranking” and “interaction” cannot be taken into account in the chosen method of data handling, i.e., it is an encyclopedia. The reference textbook comes with a CD, and is a really useful fast access to the latest information in the field of vascular biology and pathology.

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