The use of illustrations could be improved to complement the text. For example, the discussions of gait analysis and muscle microstructure and function would be enhanced considerably by good diagrams, yet there are radiographs of a knee after anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction and of hallux valgus that confer little educational benefit.

The 'current concepts' aspect of this book sometimes falls short of expectations; for example, there is no mention of the Scarfe osteotomy in the section on hallux valgus.

This book is small enough to fit into a briefcase or bag but not into the microbiologically incorrect white coat. It could, if improved, provide a useful *aide-memoire* for trainees just before exams. However, although interesting and informative in parts, because of the deficiencies outlined above, I could only recommend it to trainees and colleagues (both developed and under-developed) with reservations.

Paediatric Oncology (3rd edn)

ROSS PINKERTON, PIERS PLOWMAN, ROB PIETERS

EXTENT P/H	730 p, hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£145.00 034080775X
PUBLISHER	Arnold (London), 2004
REVIEWER	Keith Holmes
STAR RATING	****

Cancer affects one child in 500 during the first 15 years of life. The number of patients surviving to 18 years has risen from around 1500 in 1971 to about 15,000 in the year 2000. With this in mind, the editors and contributors to this important text comprise an international group of pre-eminent paediatric oncologists, mainly practising in Europe. The work represents an authoritative source of reference for all aspects of the challenging field of childhood cancer. There is a uniform structure to each chapter with a useful synopsis of 'key points' at the end.

The first section gives a fascinating insight into recent advances in the understanding of tumour and therapeutic biology. For radiation – the effects on DNA in 'hierarchical versus flexible' cell populations and apoptotic versus mitotic pathways for cell depletion. For chemotherapy – the effects on DNA damage, DNA synthesis blockade and mitosis disruption. The interaction of these therapies is related to current concepts of the molecular biology of cancer.

The importance of national and international collaboration in clinical trials for the study of these rare diseases is emphasised. Their design and application is a paradigm for the study of malignant disease in any age.

The heart of the text is a treatise on each individual tumour type. These include practical aspects of presentation, diagnostic imaging and treatment as well as the application of current molecular and genetic insights into each disease.

Most paediatric malignancies are very sensitive to chemo- and radiotherapy. The importance of pre-operative treatment after accurate histological diagnosis is illustrated by safer operations, tissue sparing and limb salvage in nephroblastoma, hepatoblastoma and osteosarcoma, respectively.

The stage of disease including local or metastatic and complete or incomplete excision has an important impact on outcome. The authors show that application of this knowledge has allowed a progressive decrease in the intensity of therapy for low-stage, low-risk malignancy, for which operation may be the mainstay of treatment with examples including nephroblastoma and neuroblastoma. Overall survival has been maintained with a reduction in the toxicity and long-term sequelae of therapy.

There remain patients with all tumour types for whom the outlook is very poor. Treatment involves the use of intensive combination chemotherapy together with bone marrow ablation with transplantation or stem cell rescue. This is covered with each tumour type as well as in a comprehensive third section that also describes novel chemotherapy agents, including anti-tumour antibodies, anti-drug resistance and anti-angiogenesis agents as well as genetic medicine.

To those practising in the field of paediatric oncology, the text is indispensable. The book is also commended to those who are curious about the biology of a group of rare diseases and the science behind their treatment.

Hepatocellular Cancer: Diagnosis and Treatment

BRIAN CARR

EXTENT P/H	300 p, hardback
PRICE/ISBN	£79.50 1588291251
PUBLISHER	Humana (New Jersey), 2003
REVIEWER	Muntzer Mughal
STAR RATING	***

This book covers the diagnosis and treatment of one of the most common cancers worldwide. The 14 chapters, starting with the aetiology of hepatocellular cancer, are written largely by doctors working at the University of Pittsburgh Starzl Transplant Institute. The Liver Cancer Center there has seen over 3500 new cases in the last 15 years and one would, therefore, expect the book to have an authoritative tone – which it has.

The topic in each chapter is covered in great detail and is extremely well referenced. Unfortunately, the editing has not been rigorous enough. For example, epidemiology of the disease is repeated in many of the chapters almost as if each was meant to stand on its own. The detail on molecular mechanisms