Book Review
Foldi’s Textbook of Lymphology for Physicians and Lymphedema Therapists
2nd English Edition
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“Foldi’s Textbook of Lymphology” is undoubtedly the most detailed text covering the complex elements of lymphology. An in-depth view of the lymphatic system unfolds with each chapter. Lymphatic anatomy, physiology, histology, pathophysiology, lymphedema and lymphedema treatment receive extensive reviews. Each chapter is written by world-renowned experts in the field.

The first English edition was published in 2003 under the title “Textbook of Lymphology”. With the second English edition, published in October 2006, the authors have provided an update to the state of knowledge in the field of lymphology. While the framework of the two editions is similar, the second edition contains enhanced text in many areas, including the most recent advances in lymphatic research. Reference and reading lists reflect these recently published studies.

The Professors Foldi stress that the bridge between basic sciences and clinical practice is imperative. With this in mind, the text is organized into two sections a Scientific Section and a Practical Section. The first section lays the scientific groundwork which supports the clinical treatment detailed in the subsequent section. Chapters cover multiple topics in a clear, organized and most comprehensive manner. Physicians, researchers, and lymphedema therapists will find aspects of each section relevant to their professional areas of expertise.

Each chapter includes numerous illustrations. The utilization of diagrams, histological slides, anatomical photos, and patient photos support the written text and enhance the readers’ understanding. Summary lists and flow diagrams are used extensively to highlight complex concepts. Mathematical formulas are given, where relevant. Each chapter ends with a comprehensive reference list or suggested reading list pertinent to the material presented.

The Scientific Section begins with a detailed review of lymphatic anatomy, including the structural elements of primary and secondary lymphatic organs. The lymph vascular systems and regional lymph nodes of various tissues and anatomical regions are clearly and systematically discussed. Chapter two covers the anatomical framework of microcirculation, including the structure of blood and lymph capillaries, interstitial connective tissue, and lymph precollectors. Fundamentals of comparative lymphology are reviewed in chapter three which outlines the influence of evolution on the development of the human lymphatic system and offers comparisons to animal lymphatic development. Lymphatic physiology and pathophysiology are reviewed in chapter four.
The principles of microcirculation, ultrafiltration, lymph formation, and lymph stasis are discussed. The interplay between the structural matrix of the interstitium and interstitial fluid, and resultant edema development, are reviewed. Classifications of edema are also outlined.

Building on these concepts the following chapter focuses on lymphedema and lymphostatic diseases of various organ systems. A detailed review of the pathophysiology, etiologies of lymphedema development, differential diagnosis, and classifications of lymphedema are included. Multiple patient photos highlight the clinical presentation. Treatment options and complications of lymphedema are discussed. Specific lymphostatic disease processes including those involving the nervous, intestinal, and hepatic systems are reviewed (for example: chylous reflux, protein-losing enteropathy, and others.)

The chapter on morphological changes in lymphedema and tumors contains many updates pertinent to the latest research in this area. The subsequent chapter describing lymphatic tissue and vessel morphology has also been updated. Chapter eight has been revised to discuss the physiology of both acute and chronic inflammation. The chapter pertaining to lipedema includes an expanded discussion of sequelae and complications. The review of chronic venous insufficiency and venous lymphatic insufficiency in chapter eleven is comprehensive. Extensive photos of imaging techniques are included within the chapter dedicated to diagnostic procedures in edema of the extremities.

A chapter is devoted to the principles of metastization of malignant tumors. Another comprehensive chapter discusses the current state of knowledge and research in the fields of molecular lymphology and the genetics of lymphedema-angiodysplasia syndromes. Additional chapters in the Scientific Section review the clinical presentation of angiodysplasia, benign symmetrical lipomatosis, and generalized edemas in women.

The Practical Section begins with an extensive and comprehensive discussion of the principles of manual lymph drainage (MLD). Photos of human subjects with the normal lymph drainage pathways illustrated on the skin have been added to enhance the understanding of lymphatic flow patterns for all anatomical regions. Technique sequences for these anatomical regions are included. Contraindications for the application of MLD are discussed.

The subsequent chapter is titled decongestive kinesiotherapy, respiratory therapy, physiotherapy, and other physical therapy techniques. This chapter focuses on the influences of the muscle and joint pumps, reviews functional treatment techniques, breathing exercises, and also discusses the effects of radiation on tissue structures. The indications and contraindications for certain physical therapy treatment modalities such as heat, cold, and electrotherapy are also reviewed.

Lymphedema therapists will find the extensive chapter dedicated to the science, theory and principles of compression bandages, and compression garments to be an invaluable reference. Detailed photos and diagrams establish a step-by-step guide for garment
measuring for both upper and lower extremities, and for the application and modification of compression bandages. Examples of various types of compressive foam applications and practical tips for use are included. Skin care is also reviewed.

Chapter twenty is devoted to the application of MLD and Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) for primary lymphedema, secondary lymphedema, and other pathologies. Once again, extensive patient photos enhance the text, illustrating various clinical presentations. A sample patient history and lymphedema evaluation form are included. Principles of patient evaluation are reviewed. Treatment techniques for primary and secondary lymphedema of the extremities, as well as the head, neck, and genital regions are included. Pathways for MLD application are illustrated for each clinical etiology. In addition, treatment of venous conditions is reviewed. Decongestive exercises for both the upper extremities and lower extremities are incorporated.

Throughout the text there is an in-depth discussion of scientific principles. Topics are presented in a comprehensive manner and are supported by the most recently published research. When reading this text it was clear to this reviewer that the authors are truly devoted to presenting the information in a manner which enables the reader to understand the complex principles of lymphology.

“Foldi’s Textbook of Lymphology” is an important reference text for physicians, lymphedema therapists, lymphedema treatment centers, and medical libraries. The Professors Foldi have been leaders in the field of lymphology for many years. Their continued dedication to excellence is evidenced by this well-written and most comprehensive textbook. Researchers, clinicians, and patient advocates will find this text an invaluable resource.