

***Human Embryonic Stem Cells: The Practical Handbook.*** Edited by Stephen Sullivan, Chad A. Cowan, and Kevin Eggan. West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. 2007. 424 pp. US \$200 Hardcover. ISBN: 978-0-470033562.

With the growing popularity and acceptability of human embryonic stem cell research, an increasing number of researchers are looking for a way to break into the field and begin utilizing stem cells for their own work. *Human Embryonic Stem Cells: The Practical Handbook* is an invaluable resource for any such researcher and has plenty to offer experts in the field.

The editors have compiled protocols from numerous experts into one organized and easy-to-read source. The editors place a particular emphasis on material useful for a researcher who is just beginning to set up an embryonic stem cell research program. The text begins with advice on how to organize and manage a stem cell laboratory and then quickly dives into basic protocols on how to obtain, characterize, and manipulate stem cells. The bulk of the text deals with the latter, with an understandable emphasis on directing differentiation into various cell types. The authors assume that the reader has only a basic knowledge of cell culture and biochemistry techniques; thus, they keep specialized terminology to a minimum, making the text accessible to researchers from various disciplines.

Although each chapter is written by a different team of researchers, each fits into a standard format that includes a short introduction, a list of materials and reagents (often including suggested suppliers and catalog numbers, an extremely helpful addition), protocols in easily followed steps, and a thorough troubleshooting section in which common questions and concerns are addressed. This simple format makes it easy to quickly find information, an invaluable asset for when one has a question mid-experiment. An extensive list of references, which include papers in which variants of the protocols were used, is also included at the end of each section.

It is important to note that the handbook is not appropriate as an introduction to the field of embryonic stem cells in general. Discussion of recent research is limited to only that which is directly relevant to the protocols being described, and while the format of the book, with contributors authoring individual chapters, makes each chapter extremely useful in isolation, it has the unfortunate side effect of making the text repetitive and disjointed when taken as a whole. This does not, however, detract from the utility of the book when used for its intended purpose: a quick reference for basic and intermediate protocols. Any researcher who works with embryonic stem cells, no matter how infrequently, would be wise to add *Human Embryonic Stem Cells: The Practical Handbook* to his or her collection.

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***Practical Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation.*** Edited by Andrew J. Cant, Angela Galloway, and Graham Jackson. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. 2007. 205 pp. US \$141.95 Hardcover. ISBN: 978-1405134019.

*Practical Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation* provides a quick, convenient overview of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT). Although the book was designed to assist health care professionals in their treatment of transplant patients, its non-technical language and broad overview of the subject matter make it a useful resource for anyone interested in learning about HSCT, either for personal or professional reasons.

Over the past decade, the success rate of HSCT has increased dramatically, as has the range of patients who may be considered candidates for stem cell transplantation. Today, HSCT is used to treat a wide variety of disorders such as leukemia, anemia, and immunodeficiency.

Consequently, there is a growing need to understand how HSCT should be con-