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**A Review of: "The Immunoassay Handbook". Edited by David Wild. Pages 640. ISBN 1-56159-064-9. Price \$1 95. Slockton Press, 49 West 24th Street New York, NY 10010.**

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BOOK REVIEW

**The Immunoassay Handbook.**

Edited by David Wild. Pages 640. ISBN 1-56159-064-9. Price \$195. Stockton Press, 49 West 24th Street New York, NY 10010.

This work has four parts, principles, instrumentation, laboratory issues, and applications. Sixteen of the 52 authors are from academic institutions, the others are from industry, roughly evenly divided between the USA and Europe. This distribution reflects the predominance of industry in current research and development in immunoassay.

Despite the numbers of authors, there is welcome evidence of a firm editorial hand in requiring similar formats in each part. The 24 instruments described all have sections on protocol, features, principle, calibration, antibodies, separation, detection, data processing, and computer interfacing. The applications have sections on clinical disorders, analytes, function, reference interval, clinical application, limitations, assay technology, sample, and frequency of use. Some of the application chapters conclude with a short further reading list, others with a full set of 40 or more references, and a few chapters have neither. More consistency would be welcome here, and absence of any reference to the literature is out of step with the generally scholarly style of the book. References are current to 1991 with some in 1992.

The instrumentation chapters cover 24 instruments in 94 pages. They provide a concise product description, but the focus is internal to each company, with no reference to external method

evaluations and instrument comparisons, even for the instruments that have been around a number of years.

A fine troubleshooting chapter by the editor lists symptoms and differential diagnoses, with suggested course of action. The chapter on Concepts, by C Davies is outstanding. It details analytical performance measures, and clinical interpretation concepts, such as likelihood ratios and analytical goals in a concise and lucid manner. This is relevant to all clinical chemists. The worked examples of statistical calculations are welcome. They can serve as a check that the canned macro chosen from a favorite spreadsheet is in fact the one that was really wanted. This chapter contains the only mathematical error spotted by this reviewer. On p86, if  $N$  is the number of pairs, as it is stated to be, then the formula preceding should have  $2N$  in place of the printed  $N$ . There is some redundancy in Chapter 32, which repeats discussion of method comparisons, regression coefficients and the equation for their calculation already covered more extensively in Chapter 3.

The chapter on Curve Fitting is a masterpiece of compactness. It says everything that should be said in 7 pages, and none of its well chosen references date after 1978.

Despite all that has been written over the years on immunoassay, this text has fresh ideas, and a crisp style, and as a bonus provides a convenient overview of current instrumentation, albeit mostly with a short half-life. This is an immunoassayers handbook, and is recommended reading.

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