

Lupus. Second edition: Fact series

By David Isenberg and Susan Manzi. Pp. vii + 101. Illustrated. R225. Oxford University Press, Southern Africa. 2008. ISBN 978-0-19-921387-0.

People encountering lupus for the first time, whether they are patients given the diagnosis, or friends or relatives of patients, are frequently bewildered by the confusing information provided, puzzled by the concept of autoimmunity and fearful of possible treatments and outcomes. This small book is aimed at this group and will inform and support patients and their families.

Individual chapters provide fairly detailed information on causes, early presenting symptoms, clinical signs and the use of tests in diagnosis and management. Treatment is discussed fully and there is an excellent chapter directed at non-drug treatment, including sun avoidance, treatment adherence, and life-style activities to reduce premature vascular disease and osteopenia.

Although brief, the sections on living with lupus and on lupus in pregnancy are very helpful and the discussion of the problems facing children and adolescents with lupus is particularly well written and insightful. Many of the chapters

are enriched by the inclusion of text boxes summarising key points or describing problems from the perspective of individual patients, which makes it appealing to read.

The appendix lists World Lupus Support Groups. The index is comprehensive.

The book would be easier to handle if the binding were of higher quality and unfortunately there are a number of spelling and typing errors. There are inconsistencies in the way drugs (such as corticosteroids) are described, with mixes of generic and trade names, and also factual inaccuracies in places (such as the rigid application of classification criteria for diagnosis, the description of skin lesions as being caused by vasculitis and the statement that window glass will protect from harmful rays). However, on the whole, I would recommend this book to anyone coming to terms with the alarming and perplexing diagnosis of lupus.

Sue Jessop