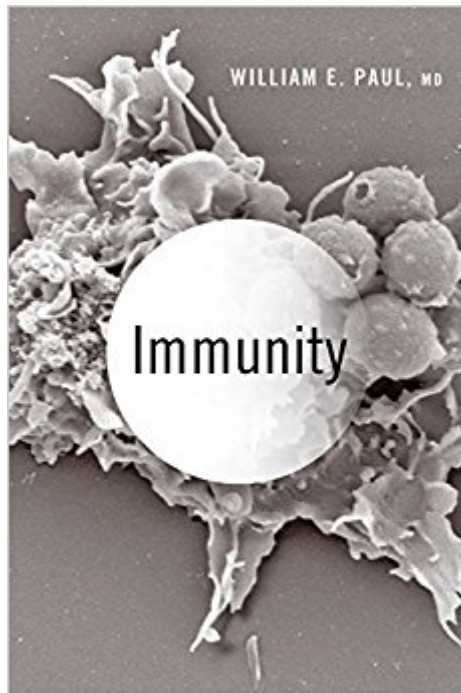


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Immunity



Synopsis

This significant book conveys Dr. William E. Paul's enduring enthusiasm for the field of immunology, the incredible accomplishments of the past half-century, and the future's untapped promises. The immune system has incredible power to protect us from the ravages of infection by killing disease-causing microbes or eliminating them from the body. Boosted by vaccines, it can protect us individually and as a "herd" from diseases such as measles. As Dr. Paul explains, however, the power of the immune system is a double-edged sword: an overactive immune system can wreak havoc, destroying normal tissue and causing diseases such as type I diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and multiple sclerosis. The consequences of an impaired immune system, on the other hand, are all too evident in the clinical agonies of AIDS and other immunodeficiency diseases. Packed with illustrations, stories from Dr. Paul's distinguished career, and compelling narratives of scientific discovery, *Immunity* presents the three laws of the human immune system—universality, tolerance, and appropriateness—and explains how the system protects and harms us. From the tale of how smallpox was overcome to the lessons of the Ebola epidemic to the utility of vaccines and the hope that the immune system can be used to treat or prevent cancer, Dr. Paul argues that we must position ourselves to take advantage of cutting-edge technologies and promising new tools in immunological research, including big data and the microbiome.

Book Information

File Size: 2817 KB

Print Length: 275 pages

Publisher: Johns Hopkins University Press; 1 edition (October 1, 2015)

Publication Date: October 1, 2015

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B015J9T8Y0

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #370,046 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #59

inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Medical eBooks > Basic Science > Immunology #165

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Customer Reviews

One probably needs some extent of background in biological sciences to fully understand the content, but it doesn't prevent anyone who is interested in immunology to get education and enlightenment from Dr. Paul's insight in the book. I personally doubt anyone is better than the author, a giant in the field, in walking us through the history of immunology and give future prospective. It is not intended as a textbook. Instead, it is a personal review of the field from the eyes of a giant in immunology. Highly recommended!

Excellent guide to the state of science as it stood at the date of publication, written with care and precision by one of the leading scientists in the field. You do need some biological sciences background to get the best from this book, but it's heartily recommended all the same.

Good introduction for the lay reader. Would have been helpful to have more illustrations to map the complex interactions of the immune system. I will be reading this book more than once to catch all the nuances.

This book makes a complex subject understandable for the layperson.

Poorly written. Writing is unclear, with run-on sentences and confusing descriptions. Simple, commonly-known terms are described in detail, while esoteric terms are introduced without any description at all. The author has a poor understanding of what people know, whether they are informed laypeople or professionals. Also, the author is obsessed with "name-dropping" and scientific awards. Spends a lot of time fawning over scientific personalities as if they are deities or something. Its ridiculous. I have several immunology textbooks and they are more interesting and informative to read.

A story of a (great) scientist and a gentleman.

I was expecting something very different from Immunity. Instead of an autobiography concerning the

life and career of one of the world's most eminent immunologist, I got a mix of dry textbook and autobiography. I don't know if I consider this a good or bad thing, but I definitely think this book is written for a specific audience and it's not the lay man. William E Paul, a prominent member at the National Institute of Health has written plenty of academic texts on immunology, held roles as president of American Association of Immunologists and the American Society for Clinical Investigation, a director of NIH's AIDs research division and has been an editor of the Annual Review of Immunology volumes 1 through 30. It's not surprising that during his career he has met plenty of medical rock stars and contributed heavily in modern immunology research. I can't imagine a better person to write a novel on immunity geared towards doctors without a PhD in Immunology. The main focus of Immunity seems to be on basics of the human immune system, leaps in immunology research both past and present and the changing environment of immunology in the face of funding changes throughout the decades: The success rate (the number of grant applications funded divided by the number submitted) has dropped from 30 percent in 2003 to 19 percent in 2012. Effectively that means that many talented individuals, particularly younger scientists, will fail to obtain research support and may leave science, cutting off a future generation. Immunity took me a few months to read, often with breaks between chapters because I required plenty of research on the basics of Immunology before I could continue. Unfortunately, while William Paul attempts to explain the basics of the study of human immunity, I found it difficult to understand some of the more technical discussions without scouring the internet for discussions on items such as T Cells, cytokines, Th2 and lymphocytes. I particularly enjoyed the small section on jawless vertebrates and adaptive immune systems. I actually learned plenty of really fantastic information that may even lead to a deeper understanding of other scientific literature. Fortunately, thanks to William E Paul, I understand quite a bit more about the human immune system and medical science as a whole since reading this autobiography/textbook. I discovered new knowledge, researched new material and learned plenty about the ever changing medical research environment. Do I recommend Immunity? Of course, but only to those wanting an intense read that often requires time for thought. Immunity is not an armchair read. It is not meant to be devoured in one sitting or a few, but in long months of reflection and self-education. Well, that is unless you are already a medical student or immunologist! This book would appeal to readers who are already well educated in medical terminology, lovers of medical science or those who are interested in a very dense novel. I wouldn't suggest this book if you want something basic or instructive on the very basics of immunology. A definite page turner with history, personal anecdotes and plenty of science to keep a reader happy.

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. Author William E. Paul crafted a great book about the immune system, how it evolved and its role in health and disease. The book is up-to-date and gives the author's view of what is to come. I also liked the personal stories that Paul told and the biographical information he provided on several important immunologists. Paul is also very specific when stating an opinion, that it is an opinion. This is not necessarily a beginner's book; a background in biology will be helpful when digesting all the information in the book. Yet for those who have the background, this is a great book that I found hard to put down. I strongly recommend it for anyone interested in biology and for people who want real information on immunology and not the stuff that frequently appears on the internet.

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