

101 Years of a New Kind of Rays

Wilfred C G Peh. Miller Freeman, Singapore, 1996.

The author is to be congratulated for producing a succinct, readable, well researched and illustrated book documenting both the historical development and current practice of diagnostic radiology and radiation oncology. The book traces the discovery of X-rays, the development of the science of radiology together with the growth of various subspecialties, for both diagnosis and treatment of disease, using interventional techniques, as well as radiotherapy.

The book is divided into 12 chapters as follows: (1) Wilhelm Conrad Rontgen and the Discovery of X-rays; (2) Controversies Surrounding and Following Rontgen's discovery; (3) Rontgen's Lennep and Wurzburg - 100 years later; (4) Discovery of Radioactivity and Radium; (5) X-rays - Production, The Early Years and Pioneers; (6) Development and Current Practice of Diagnostic Radiology; (7) Development and Current Practice of Computerized Imaging and Interventional Radiology; (8) Development and Current Practice of Radiation Oncology; (9) Development and Current Practice of Nuclear Medicine; (10) Industrial and Non-medical Applications of Radiology; (11) Radiation - Hazards and Safety and (12) The X-ray Professionals of Today. An appendix documenting the milestones of radiology and glossary of medical terms will be useful for the layreader.

The first four chapters trace the discovery of both X-rays and radioactivity, succeeding in conveying both the process and excitement of scientific discovery, as well as controversies associated with the discovery. The inclusion of historical photographs of Rontgen's and Marie Curie's original equipment and laboratory provide further interesting material to these well researched chapters. The subsequent two chapters describe further technical breakthroughs allowing clinical use of X-rays. Three chapters are next devoted to the development of modern computerized imaging with ultrasound, computed tomography, and magnetic resonance imaging, as well as interventional radiology, and the fields of radiation oncology, and nuclear medicine. Excellent descriptions of their applications in modern clinical practice are given. Enhancing the comprehensiveness of this book is a chapter devoted to the industrial and non-medical applications of radiology. Finally, a chapter on radiation safety, as well as one devoted to describing the staff of a modern X-ray department are included.

This is a well researched and written book with well balanced and illustrated chapters. It makes for entertaining and informative reading and I am sure will be interesting to laypersons, medical professionals, as well as historians.

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