

## A Commotion in the Blood: Life, Death, and the Immune System (Sloan Technology Series)

By Stephen S. Hall


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Stephen S. Hall traces the story of how doctors have learned to use the immune system and its "commotions," as one physician put it, to develop a wide array of cutting-edge therapies. "(Hall) succeeds marvelously in making science accessible to the general reader."--The New York Times Book Review. photo insert.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

"To anyone who writes about science or medicine ... the word *breakthrough* has a kind of transcendent power." It is to Stephen Hall's credit that he avoids the B-word in *A Commotion in the Blood*. Hall recounts the "manic-depressive history" of immune therapies for cancer without, said Roy Porter, "the futile pretense that the great cancer 'magic bullet' will be there as the new millennium dawns." Fred Rosen, in *Nature* magazine, calls *A Commotion in the Blood* "a wonderful book for lay readers who want to know more about current biomedical science ... replete with scientific details recounted in very comprehensible prose."

#### From Library Journal

In his latest book, science journalist Hall (*Mapping the Next Millennium*, LJ 12/91) chronicles the history of immunotherapy as a treatment for cancer. He begins with a discussion of William Coley's early attempts to treat cancer by deliberately injecting patients with a bacterial culture. He then examines numerous critical advances in the science of immunotherapy such as the discovery of cytokines and the impact of molecular genetics. Hall concludes with a lengthy review of some of the latest attempts at immunotherapy, including monoclonal antibodies, adoptive immunotherapy, and interleukin-12. The author does an admirable job of explaining the extremely complicated subject of immunology in understandable terminology. While much is still to be learned in this area, this book gives the reader a true appreciation of the complexity of human immunity?the "commotion in the blood" is not chaotic but rather a beautifully orchestrated intricate system. Highly recommended for all libraries.?Tina Neville, Univ. of South Florida at St. Petersburg Lib. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

#### From [Booklist](#)

Hall tells the exciting, involved, century-long story of cancer therapy and the immune system--a highly technical subject--excellently, bringing the personalities and careers of great researchers and clinicians to life. He starts at the beginning of the twentieth century, with William Coley and his vaccines, which were at first derided, then forgotten, but finally became the basis for much future investigation. Other stars include the dour James Ewing, the bouncy optimist Alick Isaacs, the put-upon Doris Morgan, and, above all, the restlessly innovative and aggressive Stephen Rosenberg. Hall also looks at the business side of therapeutic development; using tumor necrosis factor as an example, he shows how the marketing of scientific products can get out of hand and damage the effectiveness of later investigations. Many current and future medical news items will be clearer to readers of this fascinating, detailed, well-documented book. *William Beatty*

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Immune System (Sloan Technology Series).

**Judith Cole:**

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