Antibiotic and Chemotherapy: Anti-infective Agents and Their Use in Therapy, 8th Edition

Edited by Roger C. Finch, David Greenwood, S. Ragnar Norrby, and Richard J. Whitley

Philadelphia: Churchill Livingstone, 2003. 1000 pp., illustrated. $179.00 (cloth).

Antibiotic and Chemotherapy is a comprehensive reference source on the use and development of antimicrobial agents from their earliest history through the current era. The text is voluminous at 1000 pages, but it is written clearly and divided into 3 major sections. The first section, “General Aspects,” discusses the following aspects of antibiotic therapy and chemotherapy: history, modes of action, resistance, pharmacodynamics, renal clearance, drug interactions, the immune system and antibiotics, general principles, laboratory control, chemophrophylaxis, drug policies, drug discoveries, and regulatory considerations. Each chapter is written by an expert in the field, and highlights are contained in tables and/or figures that add to the reader’s understanding of the text.

In the second section (chapters 14–40), general comments for each class of antimicrobial agent are detailed according to the following topics: classification, modes of action, acquired resistance, toxicity, and adverse effects for the class as a group. The comments are then followed by a listing of every agent within that class ever in use worldwide, and an excellent discussion of the agent’s antimicrobial activity, resistance, pharmacokinetics, and clinical use is provided. Each antibiotic mentioned is highlighted in a box labeled “Preparation and Dosage” that contains the drug’s proprietary name, preparation dosage, and availability throughout the world. (This feature alone is fascinating when one stops to consider the amount of international travel that occurs on a daily basis. Patients who have traveled abroad may bring these antimicrobials to their clinicians’ attention.) Also, the molecular structure, clinical use, and basic pharmacokinetics are highlighted for each agent. This makes for an easily readable text. Readers may find that there are proprietary agents in use that they have never heard about in the United States; it follows that this text has appeal and utility for a worldwide audience.

The third section of the book is perhaps of the most interest to clinicians. Entitled “Treatment,” its topics range from sepsis to zoonosis. Each chapter discusses epidemiology, pathophysiology, diagnostic issues, and treatment in a general fashion and then discusses them again for specific site infections. For example, in chapter 45, “Infections Associated with Implanted Medical Devices,” there are sections on prosthetic joint infections, prosthetic heart valves, pacemakers, intravascular devices, CSF shunts, ventriculostomy-related infections, catheter-associated urinary tract infections, and peritoneal dialysis catheter infections. Each segment discusses epidemiology, pathogenesis, clinical findings and/or microbiology, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. There are excellent tables and figures to help the reader organize the salient features or concepts.

This text will be of immeasurable use to infectious diseases clinicians, as well as to clinical pharmacists who have an interest in infectious diseases. The text should also appeal to medical residents, as it has excellent, up-to-date, and detailed information on a wide array of infectious diseases. However, its size may preclude some from purchasing it. Departmental libraries and community hospitals should have this text on their bookshelves. The editors should be commended for putting together a text with truly global appeal and authorship.

Joseph R. Lentino
Section of Infectious Diseases, Edward Hines, Jr., Veterans Affairs Hospital, Hines, Illinois

Infectious Diseases: Hot Topics

Edited by Vincent Lo Re, III


This highly ambitious, multi-authored text includes 30 chapters written by 17 authors who discuss areas of infectious diseases that they have identified as “hot topics.” As the field of infectious diseases changes rapidly, with new antimicrobial agents (e.g., the severe acute respiratory syndrome [SARS] coronavirus) being identified that have the ability to quickly spread worldwide and “old” diseases (e.g., smallpox) having the potential to be resurrected as instruments of mass bioterrorism, key information must be disseminated rapidly to the practicing physician. As the editor states in his preface, the book is intended for primary care physicians, medical students and residents, as well as allied health care providers, such as physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

In general, the figures and tables in each chapter provide very useful key diagnostic and treatment information for rapid access by medical care providers. However, as can be anticipated about a book as ambitious as this one, which presents a great deal of clinical material in a condensed...
Zoonoses: Infectious Diseases Transmissible from Animals to Humans, 3rd Edition


This is a handbook of infectious diseases that are transmissible from animals to humans and vice versa. The first 2 editions of the book were written and published in German. The third edition is also available in German, but, in addition, has been translated into English in order to reach a global readership. Nine distinguished European and American scientists with diverse backgrounds in virology, microbiology, and parasitology have authored the new edition. Their fields of expertise range from clinical practice of veterinary medicine to human occupational medicine and public health. The authors stress the need for close cooperation between medical and veterinary sciences to advance the understanding of zoonotic agents and the illnesses that they cause.

The book consists of 4 main chapters comprising discussions of viral, bacterial, fungal, and parasitic zoonoses. An extensive list of subchapters that give short descriptions of well-known diseases, as well as some rare infections, can be found within each main chapter. The list is up-to-date and includes discussions about West Nile fever virus, monkey pox virus, coronaviruses (e.g., the severe acute respiratory syndrome [SARS] agent), as well as the prion disease agents that have caused recent disease outbreaks among humans and/or animals in the United States. The book has 456 pages, and the more than 230 subchapters are, by necessity, relatively short and concise descriptions of infectious syndromes. However, the length of each subchapter and the relative weight of the discussions about epidemiology, clinical presentation, pathophysiology, laboratory diagnosis, treatment, and prophylaxis vary for each of the individual subchapters and undoubtedly reflect the individual authors’ personal clinical experiences and research interests.

Several of the subchapters in the section on viral zoonoses include descriptions of recommended PCR techniques for detection of specific viral pathogens and list specific primer sequences and corresponding bibliography references. This type of information may not be relevant to some readers, since specific epidemiologic or clinical conditions on one continent may be different from those on other continents; furthermore, the procedure details may already have become outdated by the time of the book’s release. This information could also be potentially misleading, since the listed primer references, for the most part, have been limited to single articles. The subchapters in the sections for bacterial, fungal, and parasitic infections do not contain sections about diagnostic PCR techniques.

One of the main limitations of this book is the lack of an introductory chapter that considers an approach to patients

References