
Bailey and Scott’s Diagnostic Microbiology has been a tradition for medical laboratories for many years. It has carried, for excellent reason, the reputation of being a valuable and essential mainstay for all microbiology trainees regardless of profession.

The eleventh edition is similar to the tenth in many respects, with excellent illustrations and tables. Although the textbook appears larger, it is almost identical in number of pages. The discussions of microbiology taxonomy, identification, and pathogenesis issues continue to be covered extremely well. Updates of information are evident in some places, for example, in the section on mailing biohazardous materials, whereas in most areas it remains appropriately unchanged. Occasionally, a review of more information may be appropriate, but on balance the text is excellent, considering the audience for which it is intended. In addition, some new features were added, including a glossary of many terms used within the text and case studies to illustrate some of the chapters. Both of these additions are very helpful and, with future editions, will likely continue to improve. It is noted, for example, that the glossary does not include any reference to antimicrobial sensitivity or susceptibility or resistance. Perhaps future case studies could address topics such as collection and transport of specimens and interpretation of results and reports.

If there is a weak part of this book, it is Part 1, “General Issues in Clinical Microbiology”. This area could be substantially expanded and improved. Over the last decade there have been many changes that impact on laboratory practice. With laboratory restructuring and patient care redesign, patients are increasingly further away from the laboratory. It is unrealistic to initiate the brief section on specimen transport with the statement “Ideally specimens should be transported to the laboratory within 30 min of collection”. The impact of specimen transport on the quality of sample result is considerable and requires more complete discussion. In this same vein, the discussions of laboratory management, budgeting, inventory control, interviewing, and job performance are so brief and so incomplete that the space would be better used for other topics. Similarly, the issues in infection control are considerably dated and need a fresh start.

Finally, quality management deals exclusively with US laboratories regulated under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act and Amendments. Perhaps future editions of this text might consider addressing the topic on a more international level. That being said, this section represents <10% of the book, and concerns about this section do not override the high quality of the balance of the text.

In summary, the eleventh edition of Bailey and Scott’s Diagnostic Microbiology is an excellent text and has much to offer, especially as a primer text for all laboratory students and professionals. It should be considered as an essential text for all laboratory libraries.

Michael A. Noble

Department of Pathobiology and Laboratory Medicine
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC, V5Z 1M9 Canada


This book is filled with an enticing smorgasbord of topics and numerous elegant illustrations. It is organized under five units with specific subjects addressed as chapters within each unit. Each chapter has at its conclusion a brief paragraph summarizing the subject covered, study questions, and questions to prepare the phlebotomist for the certification examination.

Unit 1 introduces the reader to phlebotomy by including separate chapters devoted to phlebotomy, healthcare structure, safety, and infection control. The chapter on healthcare structure outlines organization of hospitals and clinical laboratories, with a brief tabulation of tests performed in each discipline. The role of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), safety standards, and emergency first aid procedures are covered in the safety chapter. The chapter on infection control provides a useful list of infectious organisms and their hazards and has excellent illustrations.

I found Unit 2, Phlebotomy Basics, with three chapters particularly appealing. The chapter on Medical Terminology, with a listing of commonly encountered abbreviations in medical and laboratory practice, is valuable reference material. The succinct chapter on Human Anatomy and Physiology is well illustrated and includes a tabulated listing of various organ systems and laboratory tests for their disorders. The chapter on Circulatory, Lymphatic, and Immune Systems, although brief, manages to discuss the function of blood, coagulation, and fibrinolysis. Units 3 and 4 cover topics that are directly related to the phlebotomist’s practice, with separate chapters devoted to venipuncture equipment, routine venipuncture, skin puncture, complications from venipuncture, collecting blood in pediatric and geriatric individuals, arterial blood collection, special collections, specimen transport, handling, and processing. Unit 5 deals with professional issues with chapters on Quality Phlebotomy, Legal Issues, and Point-of-Care Testing.

The book has valuable appendices, including competency check lists for key procedures described in the text, a mock certification examination, answers to chapter questions and examinations, and a comprehensive glossary. One hesitates to criticize, even minimally, such a useful and comprehensive book, but on close