

Book review

Infectious Disease 2nd Edition 2000

Bannister BA, Begg NT & Gillespie SH
Blackwell Science, Oxford UK

This is an interesting, broadly based textbook of infectious diseases, now into its second edition. The three authors combine expertise and experience in infectious and tropical diseases, epidemiology and microbiology. Being 500 pages long, it is not a large reference textbook such as Mandell's *Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases*, but it is concise and readable as a result.

The layout of the book is excellent, with colour coded sections covering:

- pathogenesis, organisms and antimicrobials;
- systematic infectious diseases;
- genital, sexually transmitted and perinatal infectious diseases;
- multisystem infections and
- special hosts, environments and community infections.

The text is peppered with case histories which test the reader's clinical abilities and how well they have read the preceding chapter. The tables and figures are, for the most part, clear and well laid out. These include gels, immunofluorescence, immunological diagrams, conventional microbiological tests, molecular structures, organ structures, radiological pictures, maps and organism life cycles. The clinical photographs are better than those in the average infectious disease textbook. There is a practical section on what to do with specimens such as cerebrospinal fluid, urine and stool.

There is an impressive chapter on upper respiratory tract infections, a subject often dealt with in a cursory fashion, and an interesting chapter on post-infectious disorders (e.g. erythema multiforme and Guillain-Barre syndrome). The chapters associated with HIV/AIDS, travel associated infections and zoonoses are short but concise. Advances in antiretroviral therapy and resistance have been such that

HIV/AIDS chapters in books tend to become outdated quickly but this section has obviously been recently revised.

The chapter on control of infection in the community contains what I thought was the best photograph; the inside of a cooling tower associated with an outbreak of legionnaire's disease.

There is a 16 page chapter on hospital acquired infections. It contains advice on minimising personnel and traffic in operating theatres and cleaning measures and waste disposal in hospitals; subjects that are frequently ignored in other infectious diseases textbooks. There are good, concise segments on infections associated with IV cannulas and indwelling urinary catheters and in intensive care and surgical patients.

If you try hard enough with any book review, it is possible to come up with some criticisms. Some of the antimicrobial agents recommended (e.g. IV clarithromycin) are not available in Australia. Some of the microbiological information (e.g. the microbiological tests used in identification of different *Corynebacteria*) were overly detailed for an infectious disease textbook.

Management of prosthetic joint infections has become such a significant part of infectious disease practice in developed countries that I believe it deserves a section to itself. In this book, it gets brief mention as an aspect of chronic osteomyelitis. I was also interested to read that pre-operative prophylaxis was recommended 2 hours prior to an operation rather than at induction of anaesthesia. There was a good section in the hospital infection chapter regarding control of MRSA, but nothing on ESBL-producing bacteria, VRE or other resistant and difficult organisms.

These criticisms are minor, however, and do not take away from the overall standard of the book and its easy readability. Its usefulness will be as a quick, concise reference on a broad range of infectious disease topics.

I look forward to keeping it on the shelf and referring to what it has to say on particular issues from time to time.

Joseph G McCormack

**Associate Professor of Medicine
University of Queensland**

**Director of Infectious Diseases
Mater Misericordiae Hospitals, Brisbane, Queensland**