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Pocket Guide to Clinical Microbiology

Third Edition. AMS Press, American Society for Microbiology: Washington, DC, 2004. XVI + 406 pages.
Format 108 × 187 mm. Binding: Softcover. Price: USD 39.95. ISBN 1-55581-288-0

Both authors are affiliated with Clinical Microbiology Service, NIH Clinical Center, Bethesda, Maryland. First author is senior scientist and chief, second authoress is supervisor, Mycology and Mycobacteriology Laboratories. As declared in the preface, writing is an art of organizing and refining information. The challenge for the authors is to identify what is important and express it in a coherent, logical manner. By its nature, a pocket guide is condensation of many disparate facts. This makes the challenge more daunting – what information should be included and excluded, and how can it be logically presented without creating a book that expands beyond the limits of a lab coat pocket?

The volume is organized into eight sections. Each section is composed of chapters including textual parts and summary tables. Section 1 is intended to give a general introduction into taxonomic classification of medically important microorganisms, nominally of bacteria, human viruses, fungi and parasites. Section 2 centres attention upon indigenous and pathogenic microbes of humans. In section 3 specimen collection and transport are described. Section 4 provides a look at bacterial diagnosis while delineating staining techniques, primary plating media and specific diagnostic tests

for detection of gram-positive and -negative bacteria, for curved and spiral-shaped microbes, and for *Mycoplasma* spp. and obligate intracellular bacteria. General comments about molecular methods for the identification of bacteria include references to DNA sequencing, PCR and restriction endonuclease analysis, and nonamplified nucleic acid probes. There is 48 summary tables for differential characteristics of selected diverse groups of bacteria. Sections 5 through 7 encompass viral, fungal and parasitic diagnosis, nominally methods for detection and identification, characteristic elements, and specific diagnostic tests. Section 8 is devoted to vaccines, susceptibility testing methods, and susceptibility patterns.

Pocket Guide to Clinical Microbiology provides readers with an easily portable and condensed quick-reference information to the clinical microbiology. It reflects changes in taxonomy and the emergence of new pathogens and diseases. Another feature is the increased use of 62 summary tables. This volume presents practical tool for teaching medical technologists and infectious diseases fellows, and offers a critical starting point for further research on topics presented.

Jindřich Jíra

Heelan, Judith S.

Cases in Human Parasitology

AMS Press, American Society for Microbiology: Washington, DC, 2004. XI + 242 pages.
Format 177 × 252 mm. Binding: Softcover. Price: USD 59.95. ISBN 1-55581-296-1

The authoress is associate professor of pathology and laboratory medicine and director of Microbiology, Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island. As declared in the introduction, parasites have been responsible for considerable morbidity and mortality throughout the ages worldwide, but today they are a problem mainly in developing countries. Although parasitic infections have a particularly strong impact on immunocompromised populations. Many immunocompetent individuals also suffer from these illnesses. Globalization has created considerable opportunities for infected travellers to bring back parasites from foreign countries.

The volume is composed of five sections covering different groups of parasites: intestinal protozoa, blood and tissue protozoa, cestodes, trematodes, and intestinal nematodes, blood and tissue nematodes, and challenging cases. Each section is composed of particular cases representing actual case histories. Discussed are 62 case studies. Each case study is opened with the patient history and description of symptoms, and accompanied by thought-provoking questions to test knowledge in several areas: morphological description, which parasite species may be suspected to cause the patient's present disorders, could this parasite be confused with nonpathogenic organisms? If so, which nonpathogenic parasites

could be confused with? Following questions are concerned with information regarding the stool consistency, with capability of the particular parasite to cause extraintestinal infections, the parasite life cycle and transmission, what laboratory techniques are recommended, how the present infection is treated and how it can be prevented, and the like. The last section covers challenging cases and details non-parasitic infections in patients with symptoms closely resembling those of parasitic diseases. The book concludes with a glossary of descriptive terms.

The volume is extensively illustrated by more than 50 colour photographs of protozoal parasites and diagnostic forms of helminths.

In conclusion, *Cases in Human Parasitology* offer an attractive and user-friendly publication presenting a most informative companion to the traditional textbooks of medical parasitology. The authoress created in this volume a valuable handbook for advanced and postgraduate students preparing for examinations – and during infectious diseases clinical practice. Also academic and medical professionals interested in medical parasitology and infectious diseases, clinical microbiology and epidemiology will find this publication a serviceable resource.

Jindřich Jíra