BOOK REVIEWS


This is a well-illustrated atlas that complements an earlier volume on bacteria and bacterial infections. The atlas is arranged in four sections: viruses, mycology, parasites, and helminths. The text describes agents of infection according to taxonomic group with notes on biology, epidemiology, diagnosis, pathogenesis, and clinical features.

It would be a useful book for anyone preparing for ‘spots’ or related examination formats where pathogens or disease processes must be identified in quick succession from images and where brief notes on diagnosis or management must be supplied, and would be a suitable addition to the shelves of libraries used by trainees.

In the preface, the author states that a work of this kind cannot be complete and is not intended to replace specialist textbooks. The section on viruses for example covers only a few of the many viruses known to infect humans. Actually it only addresses infections caused by herpes viruses in any detail, and briefly describes and illustrates adenoviruses. Fungi and eukaryotic parasites, though, are covered in detail. The atlas reminds us of the rich pathogenic fungus flora of the Americas, including species that are hardly ever seen in the old world.

A nice feature of this atlas is that one gets a strong impression that its content reflects a long and enthusiastic engagement with clinical microbiology by its author. Many of the organisms illustrated appear to be from samples that have passed through the author’s laboratory. The text gives salient features of the biology, pathology, diagnosis, and clinical management of each subject. Its content cannot be as comprehensive as specialist textbooks but has the advantage of having been written according to a uniformly readable style by a single author.

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Over the last few years the human papillomavirus has attracted an increasing amount of attention because of its association with cervical cancer, leading to many advances in papillomavirus research. However, there have been difficulties to overcome because they are not easy to cultivate in vitro and the large number of papillomaviruses show strong species and tissue specificity. This book contains a wide spectrum of protocols and techniques that have been developed to overcome these problems and study the properties of the human papillomavirus. The book contains three main themes: the detection and genotyping of human papillomavirus infections, the analysis of the human papillomavirus life cycle, and the production and functional analysis of human papillomavirus proteins.

The book is divided into 33 chapters, each written by a specific set of authors and describing a particular area of research. Each chapter stands alone and gives full details of a particular technique, which are well referenced. Some of these techniques are well established while others are novel. In addition, each chapter contains a ‘notes’ section that includes tips on troubleshooting and practical issues. The book contains no overall introduction but the individual chapters provide a short introduction that gives the background to the relevance of the technique described.

The protocols described in this book cover a wide area of research. They include qualitative and quantitative methods for human papillomavirus DNA, along with the identification of human papillomavirus genotypes and variants. Other protocols look at the use of biomarkers to monitor progression, methods to monitor the levels of mRNA or viral proteins, and techniques for the histochemical analysis of biopsy samples. Techniques are also described to look at interactions between human