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Book Reviews

Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases: Antimicrobial Therapy, 1993/1994. G. L. MANDELL, R. G. DOUGLAS, J. E. BENNETT AND R. DOLIN, eds. Pp. 181 + 140 figs. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone; 1993. £14.50 pbk.

Arguably *Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases* is the most comprehensive and useful textbook on infectious diseases which we have. This little paperback book is a summary of therapeutic options for infections. Unfortunately there are considerable differences between the American and the European approach. Some of the antibiotics and, in particular, the trade names are unfamiliar. For example, we use flucloxacillin rather than cloxacillin and some of the cephalosporins are not available. In terms of the firm recommendations for the treatment of infections, for example, we do not recommend first generation cephalosporins for established *Staphylococcus aureus* infections. Neither would we select a cephalosporin or imipenem to treat acute septic arthritis!

The book is divided up into logical sections: a summary of the antimicrobials available – more detail is given for certain classes (e.g. the antibacterials) than the antifungal and antiprotozoals which are simply tabulated. Then empiric (sic) therapy for infectious syndromes – and here we may begin to differ in our approach. Treatment of known pathogens follows. Very few drugs not available in the USA are mentioned (terbinaphine for dermatophytes is one good example). Then there is a section on prophylaxis: the guidelines for the prophylaxis of cardiac infections in dental work differ slightly from ours. The list of drugs to be avoided in pregnancy is useful but it would be helpful if this list were accompanied by some explanation. Finally there is a section on dosage and dose modification in renal failure. The section on trade names is of little value.

So, in summary, this is an American book and is suitable for US practice. As a *vade mecum* for UK practice, the houseman who follows the specific advice may at worst be stymied by being unable to get hold of the drug recommended and at best interrogated by his consultant and the microbiologist the following day!

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Chemical Disinfection in Hospitals. G. A. J. AYLIFFE, D. COATES AND P. N. HOFFMAN. Pp. 72. Public Health Laboratory Service, England and Wales. 1993. £6.50. ISBN 0 901144 34 7.

This PHLS publication is an updated version of the original published in 1984, written by the same expert authors.

The updated chapters are similar to the first edition and cover aspects such as the principles of chemical disinfection, properties of chemical disinfectants, disinfection policy, and cleaning and disinfection of the environment.

There is a new chapter on safety and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health which includes a table on occupational exposure standards for several disinfectants, most importantly, glutaraldehyde. The section on endoscopes has been expanded and includes a helpful table showing recommended immersion times for different kinds of scopes.

The two appendices cover the same topics as the previous edition but in a different order. The first is a very useful summary in table form of recommendations for decontamination of equipment and the environment, and is a ready reference for dealing with queries about, for example, how to clean a thermometer, or how to deal with X-ray equipment. Appendix 2 describes the testing methods for disinfectants.

I found this an easy book to read; the layout is pleasing to the eye and there is good use of tables. Each chapter is referenced and there is a bibliography at the end for further reading. This

book will be a valuable guide to microbiologists in training, to those in posts as control of infection doctors, to infection control nurses and to anyone needing guidance about setting up a disinfectant policy.

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