New Perspectives on Streptococci and Streptococcal Infections


This brightly coloured and sturdy hardcover book records the proceedings of the XIth Lancefield International Symposium on Streptococci and Streptococcal Infections which was held in Siena, Italy in September 1990. These symposia are held at three yearly intervals and attract the leading authorities and researchers in the field; all 210 contributions presented at the symposium are included in the book. The production and publication have taken a very reasonable 18 months, overtaking the proposed volume recording the Xth Symposium of 1987 which is not yet in print.

The main part of the book is made up of two- or three-page contributions reproduced from typed manuscripts submitted by the authors. This method of presentation results in variable typeface and size of print but all are clear to read and the tables, graphs and photographic figures have been reproduced very well. The page limits imposed on the authors have encouraged a succinct presentation of their material and little space has been wasted throughout.

The contents of the book are divided into 12 sections — epidemiology and clinical aspects; diagnostic methods; adhesion; cellular components, products and vaccines; sequelae; enterococcal and pneumococcal infections; genetic and molecular basis for antibiotic resistance and pathogenicity; antibiotic sensitivity; animal models; group B streptococcal infections; ultrastructural investigations; and immune responses. The subject index made up from keywords supplied by the authors is rather short at only four and half pages.

The text provides a good balance of contributions from the epidemiological, clinical and therapeutic to the molecular and genetic dimensions of the subject. Of particular interest are the reviews of recent changes in epidemiology of group A streptococcal infection in the USA and certain European countries (including local increases in the incidence of rheumatic fever and invasive infection) and the rapid advances being made in streptococcal genetics and molecular biology. Continuing research into the aetiology of post-streptococcal nephritis and rheumatic fever shows the complexity of these subjects but does not yet appear to be close to a full explanation of the editors.

In summary, this book gives the best statement available of the current position of streptococcal diseases and related research. The organisms remain common and important to a wide range of clinical and research workers in the medical and veterinary fields, any one of whom is likely to find much to interest them in this volume. It will also be a very useful reference work that should be made widely available in general medical and veterinary libraries and laboratories. The cost is no more than one would expect for such a book.

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