BOOKS RECEIVED

Hospital Infection Control

This book offers a concise and authoritative insight into the subject of Infection Control, reflecting the author’s extensive experience in this field, in both the United Kingdom and in developing countries.

For what may be considered to be a relatively short book, it successfully explores and covers the vast and varied areas of Infection Control; from the setting up of the service, administration and committees, through to the provision and practical application of the service, including the many problems that can and do arise. The information and advice given is both practical and achievable, supported by references to research, legislation and personal experience. A selection of references and further reading are offered at the end of the text. With such a wide audience in mind, both the optimal and alternative methods for achieving control of infection are suggested, which makes for interesting reading and thoughts.

Throughout the text, the author stresses that the basic principles of infection control are the same throughout the world. Also emphasised are the facts that infection control programmes do not need to be expensive and that a well balanced programme, together with common sense and safe practice, should save hospitals considerable amounts of money. As intended, this book is an ideal resource for anyone in the process of setting up an Infection Control service and for infection control doctors and nurses who are new in post.

A. SMITH


The 14th edition of this excellent text has kept the same general structure as previous editions. It has been written by a large group of experts in several fields. Indeed, the author list reads like a “Who’s Who” of British microbiology.

The book opens with an overview of the importance of the study and treatment of infection. The history of microbiology from its beginnings in the 18th Century is a joy to read and covers the development of immunisation, serotherapy and chemotherapy as well as the important milestones in public health. There follow sections on basic microbial biology and taxonomy which are written with brevity and clarity.

The section on bacterial genetics has, appropriately, been largely re-written and covers mobilisation of chromosomal genes, genetic mapping, genotyping and gene probes. To the author’s credit this has been achieved without increasing the size of the chapter. There is a large section on immunology which covers the basics of antigen-antibody reactions and cell-mediated immunity. Unfortunately, cytokines are dealt with only briefly.

The bulk of the book consists of chapters on specific organisms, commencing with staphylococci and covering other medically important bacteria, rickettsiae and mycoplasmas. This large section concludes with paragraphs on important viruses, fungi and parasites. The helminth section is beautifully illustrated with high quality black and white photomicrographs. The volume closes with sections on clinical topics such as antimicrobial usage and hospital infections.

Overall the book is a thorough overview of Medical Microbiology in the 1990s. It is up to date, covering such topics as penicillin-resistant pneumococci, Helicobacter pylori, Chlamydia pneumoniae, and the taxonomy of gram-positive anaerobic cocci. The authors also cover controversial areas such as the efficacy of BCG immunisation and the minimal infective dose for salmonella infection.

There are few disappointments in the volume, and omissions are minor. For example, there is no mention of Xanthomonas maltophilia and there are inaccuracies regarding the treatment of shigellosis and the taxonomy of yersiniae.

Notwithstanding these small reservations, the book is clinically relevant, clearly written with definitions highlighted, well indexed and reasonably priced. With the new edition this text will remain essential reading for medical students and undergraduate microbiology students. It will also serve as a useful reference for medical microbiologists of all grades.

A. FRAISE

Developments in Biological Standardization. Volume 76 Continuous Cell Lines—An International Workshop on Current Issues


This book is an account of a meeting held on the NIH Campus in March 1991 whose organisers included the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research of the FDA. Over the years the question of the appropriateness of cells for making medicinal products such as vaccines, hormones or antibodies has been discussed at length. The conclusions have tended to be conservative, correctly in my view, on the grounds that what has been done once can probably be safely done again. The 1991 meeting concerned cell line characterisation, factors affecting product consistency, retroviruses, validation of processes for viral removal, adventitious agents, expression vectors and insect cells; this volume summarises the discussions. In my view it is a valuable contribution which should be noted by those involved in the manufacture of human medicines by recombinant DNA or any other technology in eukaryotic cells. It contains valuable summaries of the state of the art in a number of fields and provides data to support many current strongly held opinions in this area. I would particularly recommend this book to venture capital biotechnology companies.

P. D. MINOR