

Book Review

Clinical Case Series: Clinical Cases in Infectious Diseases – A Public Health Approach

Sanjaya Senanayake
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When it comes to managing infectious diseases of public health significance, navigating the clinical-public health interface can be difficult. It is tempting to just focus on your own area of responsibility be it the clinician who is primarily focussed on getting the affected individual better or the public health official whose expertise is to protect the immediate public from the spread of disease.

A new book *Clinical Cases in Infectious Diseases – A Public Health Approach*, by Dr Sanjaya Senanayake of the Canberra Hospital, attempts to break down this 'silo' approach to the management of infectious diseases. The author is in a unique position, having both worked in a public health unit and as an infectious disease physician in a large tertiary hospital. This experience has enabled the author to produce a text that outlines not only what one needs to do at both an individual and population level in response to a specific disease but also how these two level of responses complement each other through improved collaboration.

In each of the 22 chapters, the reader is presented with an unfolding scenario, starting off with a clinical case, likely differential diagnoses and what is considered best practice in terms of initial investigation and treatment. Each scenario focuses on a specific infectious disease (for example meningococcal) and offers advice on when to notify the local public health unit. The scenarios finish with a summary of the key public health actions

that are likely to occur for each disease and how these actions supplement clinical decision-making.

Also interspersed within each scenario are questions that one is likely to ask when responding to a specific disease (for example, which categories of tuberculosis are considered infectious, how long is someone infectious and what measures should one put in place to minimise tuberculosis transmission). The author strategically places the latest evidence within the scenario so the reader has a better understanding why they are performing a specific action at the time they are performing that action.

For frontline clinicians, microbiology staff and public health officials, this book is an easy to read introductory text on how to practically manage different scenarios of communicable disease. Although not pocket size, the book is small enough to carry around as a quick reference guide. For specialists looking for a more comprehensive text, this book in isolation may not be enough but as a stand alone summary text with key references at the end of each chapter, the author gives the reader the option to dig further for information if they wish to do so.

When managing infectious diseases, particularly during a possible outbreak, it is important that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing. This book is a refreshing addition to the existing literature base and for those who are looking for an alternative from the dry presentation of facts often found in many an infectious disease text, this book is for you. I look forward to the next edition if one is planned.

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