

Book review

Compiled by *Marilyn Beattie* • Assistant Editor, AIC

A Guide to Infection Control in the Hospital

Wenzel R (USA), Edmond M (USA), Pittet D (Switzerland), Devaster J-M (Belgium), Brewer T (USA), Geddes A (UK) & Butzler J-P (Belgium) [Eds], BC Decker Inc. Hamilton: Ontario, 1998

This 182 page handbook is comprehensively written and well referenced. It is ideal for the new infection control practitioner and, being light and almost pocket sized, could be easily carried on ward rounds as a ready reference. The selection of editors and contributors from an international perspective is impressive, with wide ranging contributions from many of the European countries and the USA.

The introduction provides supporting statistics and a hypothesis proposing that all epidemics and clusters of nosocomial infections are preventable. The objective of the book is therefore to provide principles designed to minimise

nosocomial infection in hospitals and prevent clusters and epidemics. The intention is stated that revision will occur every 2 years. Therefore if purchase of the book is intended, it may be prudent to enquire about the release date of the second edition prior to placing an order.

The book contains 39 chapters covering the many diverse aspects of infection control as it relates to the hospital setting. It dedicates chapters to each of the common nosocomial infections and those community acquired infections requiring special management, such as tuberculosis. The overarching thrust of each chapter is to provide principles and recommendations to prevent the occurrence of infection in the first instance or to reduce the risk of transmission. Each chapter begins with the statement of a 'key issue' – which to me is more familiar as an 'outcome statement'. There is a list of established infection control principles or 'known facts' as they relate to the topic and recommendations for suggested practice. Controversial issues relevant to the topic are also addressed. Most chapters contain a summary for quick consultation. Whilst chapters are short and abbreviated (i.e. two to six pages), all are thorough. Additionally, the book contains some interesting statistics that would be useful for teaching purposes. There are some useful tables. Table 38.1 lists a number of common communicable diseases, the type of isolation applicable, protective apparel required and means of prevention or post exposure prophylaxis.

High-risk areas such as the operating suite, emergency room, pharmacy and laboratory are described, depicting the risks and recommendations for infection prevention. Other chapters relate to paediatric immunisation, profiles of microorganisms commonly associated with nosocomial infection and antibiotic resistance. Sterilisation and disinfection of instruments and equipment is explained from levels of disinfection to discussion on wrapping materials suitable for sterilisation. Patient areas are examined in regards to environmental cleaning and the health care worker is considered as a source of nosocomial transmission.

This is an excellent little book for fledglings in infection control and will be of interest to those well versed in the specialty. My final evaluation? I ordered a copy for my department; I thought this was a valuable text.

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