

Infectious Diseases: A Clinical Approach, 3rd Edition

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The list of authors for this textbook is a who's-who of Infectious Diseases Medicine in Australia. The first edition was published in 2001 and had its roots in the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital in Melbourne. The third edition weighs in at almost 700 pages and is unique for two reasons – its Australian focus and as its title suggests, its clinically-oriented approach to Infectious Diseases. This edition has been extensively revised, included new chapters on diseases of importance in Australia, tropical Australia, South-east Asia and the South-western Pacific.

The book is divided into six sections: The first, 'A General Approach to Infectious Diseases' includes a general overview of the practice of Infectious Diseases and details on the specific infectious diseases history and examination as well as use of diagnostic microbiology services and an overview of public health as it applies to infectious diseases. The first chapters on the approach to infectious diseases and the infectious diseases history draw on the extensive clinical experience of Allen Yung and while short, are very high-yield.

Part 2, 'Approach to Presenting Problems' is one of the book's great strengths, because most textbooks of infection take an organism or disease based approach. Beginning with the patient's presenting syndrome and progressing through the differentials and appropriate investigations and treatment mirrors the clinical approach to infection. The common clinical syndromes are all covered in enough – but not too much – detail and each chapter is supplemented with a few pertinent references.

Moving on from syndromes, Part 3 covers specific organ infections – bone and joint, cardiovascular, abdominal, neurological, soft-tissue and urinary tract. Common diseases are covered in some detail, with many esoteric diagnoses getting at least a paragraph and a further reference. Important differentials or useful clinical lists are presented in frequent boxes and tables for ease of reference. Treatment guidelines include antibiotic choices (based on Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic) but important non-drug treatments (chest drains for empyaemata, etc.) are also covered. The section on sexually transmitted infections is brief, but includes a table covering common causes of genital syndromes with treatment recommendations. *Mycoplasma genitalium* is mentioned in passing.

The infectious diseases 'essentials' are covered in Part 4, which deals with major infections in a chapter of their own and covers hepatitis, HIV, malaria, tuberculosis and influenza

(among others) in greater detail. The chapters all include epidemiological information (with a focus on Australasia/South-east Asian rates) and basic microbiology before moving on to more comprehensive coverage of diagnostics and therapeutics than chapters in the previous section, although again the use of diagrams, tables and lists is excellent.

The final clinical section looks at infections in specific populations – the elderly, diabetics, immunosuppressed patients and then has an excellent regional section including a chapter 'Viral and rickettsial infections of particular relevance to Australia' which includes up to date information on the recent Hendravirus outbreaks on the east coast as well as the more commonplace arthropod-borne infections such as Ross River. Infection in Northern Australia receives a dedicated chapter with a focus on Indigenous health as well as Australian tropical medicine. Nosocomial infection is not left out and provides a useful overview of hospital infection control for community-based practice.

Section 6 focusses on therapeutics and has chapters on antibacterials, antifungals, antivirals, antihelminthics and vaccination. A textbook like this cannot hope to be a comprehensive drug reference, but despite this, these chapters are impressively up to date. The area of antiviral drugs for Hepatitis B is a rapidly evolving area, but the book includes telbivudine and other new agents.

'Infectious Diseases: A clinical approach' is not a replacement for the copy of Mandell on the infectious diseases registrar's shelf, but it is not trying to be. What it does do is provide a clinically-focussed introduction to the area of infection for students, junior doctors and general practitioners and even first-year infectious diseases registrars. Looking up a clinical syndrome and finding a brief guide to the important differential really makes me wonder why more textbooks in medicine don't take this very practical approach. It is a worthy reference for clinicians who need a little bit of infection in their daily practice and for this reason, I think it would be an excellent addition to the bookshelf in any sexual health clinic.

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