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Book Review

Textbook of Medical Parasitology, Sumeeta Khurana, Abhishek Mewara. Published by Universities Press, Hyderabad, India (2021). ISBN: 9789389211894

The “Textbook of Medical Parasitology” provides on a single platter all the information on important parasitic infections, including their epidemiology, pathogenesis, clinical aspects, treatment and control programmes, which are essential to know for the medical students in India and abroad.

The first section presents general concepts about different aspects of parasitic infections. The information about life cycles of parasites such as modes of transmission and source of infection, and involvement of one, two or three hosts is compiled in tables. These tables will be very helpful for the students to have a grasp about the general concepts of parasitic infections when they begin reading the subject, and will also help them to consolidate their learning while revising the subject at the end of the curriculum. This section also includes the basic concepts of immunology relevant to parasitic infections in a concise form.

The sections II and III deal with the individual parasites in detailed chapters. Each chapter crisply describes the general biology, epidemiology, laboratory diagnosis, treatment and control programme for the specific parasite. The illustrations of life cycle are colourful and appealing, and are embedded with a brief description of the clinical features associated with different life-stages and location of the parasite in the human body. This approach provides a clear picture of how the knowledge of a parasite's life cycle is relevant from a clinical perspective. The secondary box along with the life-cycle highlights the important aspects in a schematic way which enhances the visibility of the salient points of the life-cycle, and will make it easy for the students to reproduce them in examinations. Often, students memorise the parasite's life cycle without realising its clinical relevance. The above approach of the authors would go a long way to help the students to understand the life-cycles in a logical and clinically oriented manner.

The organisation of chapters is according to the involved organ-systems and gels well with the competency-based medical education (CBME) pattern of teaching. In section IV, the various disease manifestations of parasitic diseases of the individual organ-systems are described. These are organized as per the CBME pattern, and in addition

to parasitic etiology, also lists bacterial, viral and fungal causes of the various infections of these organ-systems. In section V, the authors have introduced the basic concepts of zoonotic parasitic infections, medical entomology, and control programmes for parasitic diseases in India, which provides a wholesome approach of learning about parasitic diseases. The annexures towards the end of the book provide the approach to laboratory diagnosis of parasitic infections. The last annexure is a very handy compilation of the treatment modalities of all the important parasitic infections presented alphabetically, which makes it very easy to find the recommended treatment for any specific parasite quickly.

The colourful illustrations and photographs make the chapters engrossing and add value to the textual content. The tables, flow charts and summary boxes for hosts, diagnosis and treatment have made the reading simple and easy to understand and revise. Each chapter on parasites begins with a clinical case study depicting the classical clinical presentation for the disease caused by the parasite. These case-studies and multiple-choice question given at the end of the chapter for each parasitic infection would help the student in synthesising his or her clinical skill and are likely to have a long-term impression in the student's mind when they start their clinical practice.

The online resources for the book are available on an app downloadable for mobile phones. This app contains power-point presentations for the chapters, and over 45 case-studies with more than 270 MCQs which will be very useful for teaching and learning in this digital era, especially for the internet savvy youth.

Overall, this book is an authoritative source of information on all aspects of medical parasitology and contains useful and necessary information for undergraduate medical students, postgraduate students of medical microbiology, and also for clinical practitioners and personnel involved in various aspects of control programmes for parasitic infections.

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